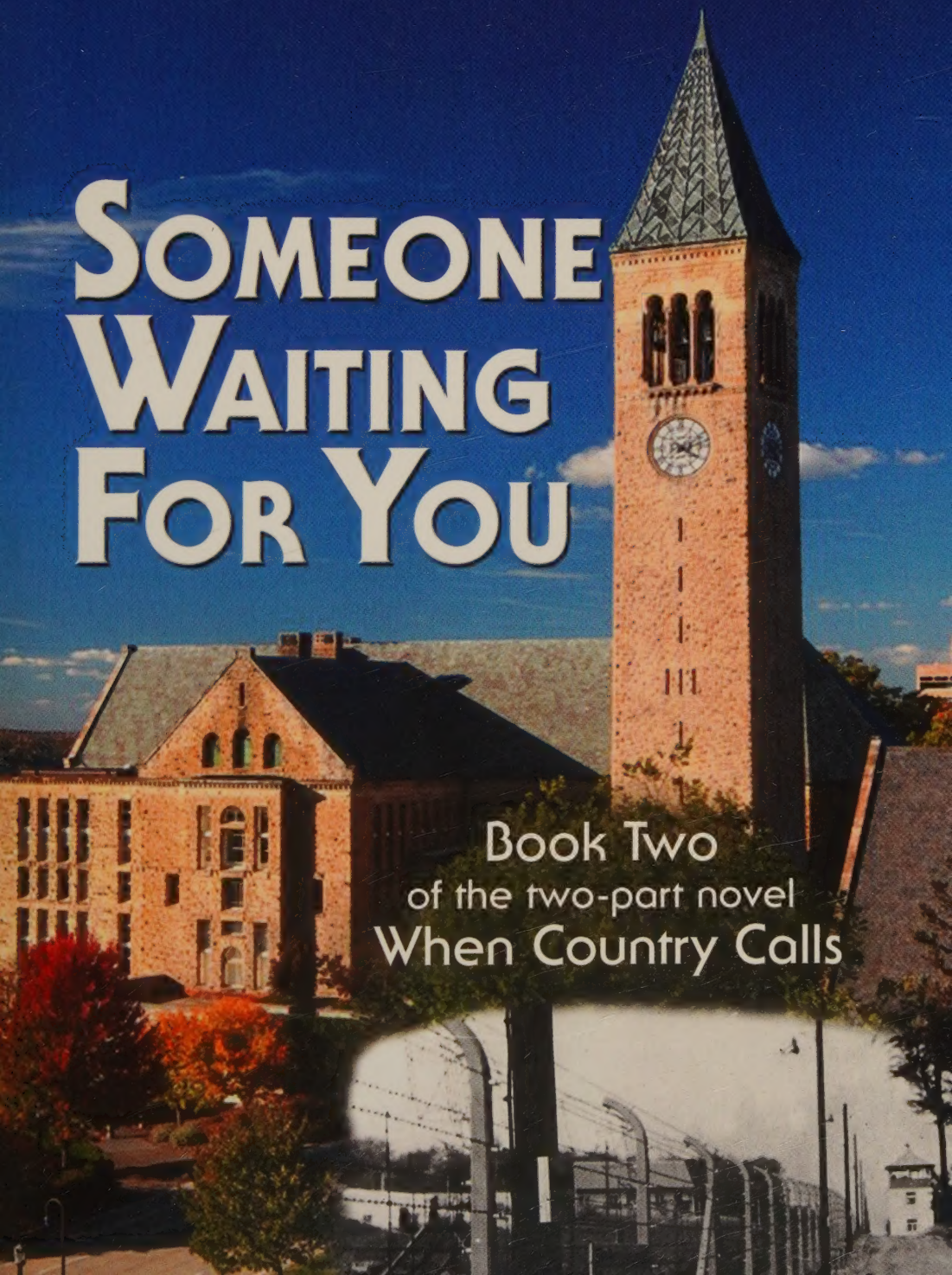
JEROME OSTROV

SOMEONE WAITING FOR YOU



Book Two
of the two-part novel
When Country Calls

Someone Waiting For You

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By Jerome Ostrov

COMTEQ PUBLISHING
Margate, New Jersey

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Margate, New Jersey 08402
609-487-9000
ComteQpublishing.com

ISBN 978-1-935232-85-8

Book & cover design by Rob Huberman

Printed in the United States of America

Author's Note

This second volume in the two-part saga, When Country Calls, relies upon fictional characters and incidents. As with its predecessor, In Ways Unimagined, I have tried to be faithful to the timing and placement of historical events. Battles take place when and as they were fought; hospital units, especially the 95th Evacuation Hospital, serve in the manner they once did; and military forces confront one another consistent with original orders of battle. Overall, I have made every effort to position characters and their actions in their proper chronological and geographical setting.

To give flavor to the action, fictional characters sometimes encounter real historical figures. The interactions of these persons and the book's characters are made up. I have attempted to give these interactions plausibility by replicating actual historical outcomes. Any resemblance in name or action between one of more of the characters and any one or more real persons is unintended and coincidental.

This story, as with the first, is dedicated to my loving and talented wife, Bobi, who personifies the dreams of many of the characters in both books, my daughter Becca (her husband, Dan, and their daughters and my heartthrobs, Sadie and Willow), my son Max and my daughter Julia (and her husband, Bobby).

I wish to express appreciation to my friend, John Coyle, for voluntarily taking on the job of reviewing my original manuscript. I also wish to express thanks to my proofreader, Andrea Kronzek, and to my wife, Bobi, for giving the story a thorough once over before giving it her okay.

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Prologue
Aboard the RMS Queen Mary
August 1936

The two new arrivals from England leaned over the railing of the RMS Queen Mary as it began its gradual approach into Upper New York Bay and the nearby Cunard Piers. As the great ship glided past Bedloe's Island, the eyes of the two locked on to the Statue of Liberty. They followed her right arm, raised 42 feet in the air. There, held by her great hand, was the torch of liberty with its message of welcome and assurance. The two young passengers had brought with them the immortal words from Emma Lazarus' ode to the statue, The Great Colossus. They had promised their parents they would recite Lazarus' timeless composition as they sailed by the great lady, but they had no idea how deeply it would affect them. Under the bright azure sky, they began devoutly, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore." As they reached the final words of the poem, the stanza that for half a century had given expression to all that the statue represented, their youthful voices cracked. With a teary-eyed effort, they strained to complete the remaining stanza of their short recitation: "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

The moment lingered, but soon they recovered their composure. They again felt the elation that comes with being 17 and at the cusp of a great adventure. But they were also feeling homesick for the parents they had left behind in England.

It was August 1936. In Nazi Germany, dark clouds hovered alarmingly over the country's 500,000 powerless Jews as the Reichstag proclaimed one law after another aimed at devastating the

country's Semitic population. Most telling were the two laws passed the previous September at the Nazi Party's annual rally. The first of these so-called Nuremburg Laws, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, declared that Jews and Germans could no longer marry. The second, the Reich Citizenship Law, pronounced with even greater ominousness that only persons of German or related blood were eligible to be citizens. Those who failed to qualify—the Jews and later the Romani—were considered wards of the state, lacking all rights and helplessly vulnerable to an increasingly deranged Adolph Hitler and his spineless toadies.

For most English 17-year-olds, the events taking place in Germany might only have been of passing interest. But, each boy's family had a strong connection to Germany and its threatened Jewish community. Despite their elation over what lay ahead, this connection also occupied their thoughts and weighed on them.

For the winsome Jonathan Sternbloom, the memory of that April day in 1933 remained in his consciousness. His father, Anton, and he were at the Hamburg train station saying goodbye to his mother, Hannah, as she boarded the train headed for Poland. It was a journey that would take her through a virulently anti-Semitic Germany and a Poland deeply rooted in intolerance toward its Jews. The parting had been tearful, and both father and son had been filled with foreboding as they waved goodbye.

Anton had been an esteemed professor of anthropology at the University of Hamburg. He had held on to his position as long as he could, but the writing was on the wall. In one of the earliest Nazi proclamations, Hitler had served notice that Jews would no longer be welcome to occupy academic positions. After much deliberation, Anton had chosen to leave his position and accept another post offered by a colleague at University College London.

The decision to leave for England had been wrenching for Anton, made even more so when Hannah had insisted on taking

the train across the Polish border to Danzig before continuing to England. In Danzig, Hannah hoped to see her family, especially her brother, Abraham Herskovitz, and her ailing mother, Sofia. But Hannah's journey had gone disastrously awry.

How far Jonathan had come since that bleak April day. After his father and he left Hannah, they boarded the Hamburg Sea Queen, a steamer bound for London. Jonathan had been consumed with anxiety, having left school midterm and having set sail to England without his mother. With a display of resilience well beyond his years, he had barely complained. Indeed, he had used his time on board ship to make friends with the red-headed Charlie Brody, who now stood beside him on the upper deck of the Queen Mary.

Prior to that earlier voyage, Charlie and his mother, Saundra, had been visiting Saundra's sister, Agatha Kreisler, in the little town of Geesthacht, about 35 kilometers from Hamburg. Their visit had coincided with Passover. Together, the two sisters had reprised some of their favorite childhood Passover dishes and had even put on a respectable *seder* for Agatha's appreciative German husband, Lorenz, and their two assimilated children, Sarah and Werner.

While in Geesthacht, Saundra had become aware of the anti-Jewish sentiment that was coursing through Germany and increasing by the day. Even so, she had been shocked when, one day, she and Charlie witnessed a parade of the *Sturmabteilung*, Hitler's brown-shirted paramilitary, and listened to the anti-Semitic slogans hurled by the parade's giddy onlookers. When it came time for Charlie and her to return to England, Saundra had been filled with concern for her sister.

She had tried to persuade Agatha to return to England along with her family. Her entreaties had borne little fruit, especially after Agatha broached the matter with her husband. Lorenz was a proud German and a war hero. He could not imagine his family, Jewish or otherwise, being swallowed by the anti-Semitic hysteria

that was overtaking Germany. He, of course, had been wrong. Fortunately, luck had been on his side and he had found a job in Denmark. Shortly afterward, he had arranged for Agatha and their two children to join him in Copenhagen.

A few days after Saundra's talk with her sister, Charlie and she had boarded the Hamburg Sea Queen for the trip back to London. There, Charlie met Jonathan. Charlie had suggested that Jonathan and he explore the ship, an invitation welcomed by the preternaturally curious Jonathan. But more importantly, the prospect of exploration had given Jonathan a chance to escape from his thoughts. He missed his mother and knew they should have heard from her. His uncommon intellect usually enabled him to reason things out, but he could not understand what was happening. Why hadn't they heard from Uncle Abraham and Aunt Mittel? Weren't they supposed to meet his mother in Danzig and take her to see Grandma Sofia? If something was wrong, were his Herskovitz cousins, Janós and Irena, safe? The questions kept pressing in on him, and the chance to explore was a great relief.

The boys had enjoyed one another so much that Charlie insisted Anton meet Saundra. When they did, Charlie went one step further and suggested that Anton and Jonathan move to their neighborhood in the Golders Green section of London. Anton had tried to avoid conversation. He had not heard from Hannah. Distraught over the lack of contact, the last thing he had wanted was to become involved with strangers. But Saundra had taken up the chant, noting that her sister-in-law Vanessa, who lived nearby, rented out rooms and currently was without tenants.

Saundra had wired her husband, Giles, who, with their other son, Randy, had remained home in Golders Green. Giles was deputy curator of the London Museum, an unusual position for a Jew, even one as accomplished as Giles. Both Giles and Vanessa had been at the wharf to greet Anton and Jonathan when the steamer arrived in London.

Even as Jonathan marveled at the fast approaching New York skyline and breathed in the smells of the city, his thoughts shifted from Hannah to Vanessa, whom he had also come to think of as a mother. Widowed since her husband fell in battle during one of the early episodes of the Great War, Vanessa's life had taken on a colorless routine as she stood on the wharf awaiting the passengers from Germany. In addition to renting out rooms, she worked in a small dress shop and designed women's wear. Her free time was divided between doting on her brother's children and doing volunteer work for the Jewish war veterans.

Vanessa had been eager to meet Anton and Jonathan. Renting out two rooms would help greatly with her expenses. But as she was introduced to father and son, she began to reconsider. She felt daunted at the prospect of taking in two boarders who were in great emotional distress over Hannah's unexplained absence. Saundra had reassured her sister-in-law that the entire family would help, so Vanessa had taken in the two new refugees from Germany. She could never have imagined what lay ahead.

The days spent without hearing from Hannah had turned into weeks and then months. During this time, Vanessa had ungrudgingly looked after her two boarders. With a newly-discovered maternal instinct, she had tended to Jonathan as he faced the trials of being Jewish in a new country and in a new school. Without artifice, she had also worked earnestly to make life as easy for Anton as his long hours at the university and his tormented thoughts would permit. Every night she set a place for her downcast boarder, often accompanied by his favorite whiskey, no matter the hour of his arrival.

When a prank gone awry had brought Charlie and Jonathan before the local magistrate, Vanessa had stepped in to help. The magistrate had been lenient, requiring only that the boys perform community service in the form of aiding elderly war widow Hilde Zorrofsky, the victim of their prank, with the maintenance of her

house. Vanessa had pitched in with many of the more difficult household and cleaning chores.

In a strange twist, the boys had become close to Mrs. Zorrofsky. They were captivated by her stories of the Polish *shtetl* where she had lived as a girl and they were attracted to her Jewish past. Soon they insisted on attending *Shabbos* dinner at Mrs. Zorrofsky's house, with their parents and Vanessa in tow. Over time, the dinners kindled a spark of Jewish awareness in Anton and he, too, began to fall under Mrs. Zorrofsky's spell. With each passing Sabbath, Anton also began to take notice of Vanessa and appreciate all she had done during his loneliness. His appreciation had turned to affection and she had reciprocated. After receiving official confirmation that Hannah had been the victim of a demented lieutenant in the *Sturmabteilung*, Anton had felt great sadness but also the relief that comes with closure. Soon after, Vanessa and he were married.

Mrs. Zorrofsky had died, leaving her estate in trust for Jonathan and Charlie. Indirectly, she had also bestowed on Jonathan another legacy. Her recollections of Jewish life in the *shtetl* had stimulated Jonathan's imagination and had triggered many questions about Judaism that Anton, though moved, had not been able to answer.

After consulting his new friend, Rabbi Professor Stanley Marcus, Anton had provided Jonathan with a gift his son would long treasure. Drawing on Marcus' contacts, Anton had arranged for Jonathan to spend time working on a *kibbutz* in Palestine the following summer. It was there that Jonathan had acquired his deep love for the land. It was also there that he had met and become hopelessly infatuated with fellow summer *kibbutz* worker Kayla Lewis of Cape Town, South Africa. They had separated after the summer and since then had been relegated to nurturing their aching love by mail.

As fate would have it, it was Kayla who had brought the two

travelers to this far-away destination with its many uncertainties. Jonathan and Charlie had remained tethered, a relationship that had played out at the esteemed St Paul's school in London. There, they had excelled in the classroom and on the football field. Jonathan had been the star, with Charlie close behind. Both had been bound for Oxford. But the previous summer, Heath Winston, master of sport at St Paul's, had introduced Jonathan to Todd Wentworth, a former classmate of Winston's and now a classics instructor and assistant soccer coach at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Wentworth was spending time with his family and also recruiting for the university's soccer team. He had observed Jonathan play football and, taken by his talented play, had offered him a scholarship to compete at Cornell. Wentworth had made the same offer to Charlie, if only to ensure Jonathan's acceptance.

Even with Cornell paying for tuition and board and Mrs. Zorrofsky's bequest underwriting the rest, Jonathan had hesitated. He knew that one does not readily throw away the chance of becoming an *Oxonian*, an Oxford Man. However, Jonathan had suddenly changed his mind. Kayla had recently informed him that she would be going to school at McGill University in Montreal, where one of her brothers was then a student. Jonathan had asked Wentworth how far Cornell was from McGill. When Wentworth responded that Montreal was a mere five-hour train ride from Ithaca, the deal was closed. Ultimately, both Charlie and he agreed to journey across the Atlantic to the distant upstate New York town of Ithaca. With the ship's loudspeaker blaring the announcement to disembark, their adventure would soon begin.

Chapter 1
College in All of Its Wonder
August–December 1936

Jonathan and Charlie had brought visas and other immigration papers prepared by the US consulate in London. Uneventfully, they cleared customs. The gates of their new home were now opened wide. All around them, the sounds and sights of New York City pulsated with an energy the two teenagers had never experienced. Unfortunately, there was no time to explore and take in the wonders of the city. Their transatlantic passage had taken longer than expected and they were overdue at Cornell, where soccer practice was about to begin.

They had received instructions on what train to take from Penn Station, but they were thrown off course by the vast size of the station and the intensity of so many passengers scurrying about in pursuit of their own trains. Finally, a helpful stationmaster directed them to their track and the train that would take them up the Hudson Valley toward the Capital District, Utica and Syracuse.

Though one of the earliest parts of the country to be settled, the Hudson Valley struck Jonathan and Charlie as modern by comparison to the English countryside. Nevertheless, they marveled at the Hudson's palisades and the endless succession of farms and small towns that passed before them. At length, the train arrived in Syracuse where the boys, now weary from their trip, found the bus station and embarked on the remaining part of their journey.

They arrived in Ithaca in the early evening and had an opportunity to get their first glimpse of Cayuga Lake. The lingering August day still provided good visibility. At first, they were

disappointed; Ithaca was decidedly an unexciting looking place. The prosaic downtown area near the bus station had an industrial feel. In many areas, three and four story warehouses and farming supply buildings were the most common structures. Fortunately, the boys did not have much time to dwell on their observations. They were expected at the campus.

They secured a cab and at last were on their way to their home away from home for the next four years. As they traveled through the city and up the hill toward the Cornell campus, they passed through neighborhoods with small residences much like those found in the sparer precincts of London. As the cab got closer to Cornell, the houses were larger and grander. Finally, the taxi entered the Cornell grounds.

Even at dusk, the boys could see that the campus was unlike what they had observed earlier in the city. Indeed, it was splendid. Many of the buildings looked like they had been plucked from Oxford's most venerable quads and complexes, but much more impressive was the overall beauty of the grounds. The campus had originally been farmland. In 1865, Ezra Cornell, the founder of Western Union, donated the staggering sum of $400,000 for the construction of a new university in Ithaca. New York State, under the recently-enacted Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act, contributed a large swath of farmland for the university envisioned by Cornell. The result was the bucolic tapestry that now greeted the two youthful admirers.

Flowerbeds featuring clusters of peony, lily, chrysanthemum, daisy and tulip spread their colors everywhere, as stately beech, hickory and English elm stood watch over shimmering green lawns interspersed with carefully-maintained paths. An embowered, grassy expanse larger than several soccer fields constituted the lawn of the Arts Quad, where one could see the architectural origins of the university in the form of three structurally-distinct stone buildings.

The boys had little opportunity to do much more than look around before Nicky Bawlf, Cornell's head soccer coach since 1920, accompanied by Todd Wentworth, came by to greet them.

"Hello, boys," said Wentworth. "I hope you had a good trip. I'd like you to meet your football coach for the next four years. Only, please try to get in the habit of calling your sport *soccer* and not *football*. Around here, as you probably know, football means something else entirely. Nicky doesn't like the two to get confused because it's hard enough maintaining soccer's visibility without getting it mixed up with the much more gruesome, but widely admired, American sport of football."

Jonathan teasingly saluted and said, "Don't worry, Mr. Wentworth. We left the word *football* behind when we sailed out of the Thames. And, thank you. Our trip was just fine." Charlie nodded his head in agreement.

"Good answers on both counts," said Bawlf. "Now that we've got the hard part down, practice begins tomorrow. All of the fall athletes are here for a week before the freshmen arrive on campus. When the other freshmen get here, you'll have more of a tour. We've got a little paperwork to do now. Then we'll go to your dormitory and find your rooms. The two of you will share a room this week. You'll be assigned to new rooms when the other students arrive."

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By the time Jonathan and Charlie got to their dormitory, it was dark and the buildings were shadowy, indistinct structures. However, when they awoke in the morning, they found themselves in an academic compound of exceptional appeal. The nine Baker Dormitories, as they were known, were designed in the late Gothic style and constructed of native bluestone and trimmed in Indiana limestone. The overall effect of the buildings was one of nobility and importance. As the boys were admiring the buildings, Charlie said to Jonathan, "Todd wasn't kidding; this place is beautiful. And

these buildings—they're right out of Oxford. If it weren't for the American accents, I'd think we were back home."

"Right," said Jonathan. "Let's eat fast because we have to be at soccer practice in a little while."

When the boys got to the soccer practice field, they found that most of the other team members had already arrived. They were introduced first to the upperclassmen and then to the six other freshman players. Two of the new players were British subjects who had lived in Hong Kong, two were from preparatory schools in Pennsylvania, and two were from Cape Town, South Africa. Excitedly, Jonathan inquired whether the South African boys knew Kayla, but neither had heard of her. There were 15 upperclassmen, for a total team membership of 23 players. Having so many players on the team allowed for full 11-on-11 scrimmages. Coach Bawlf advised at the outset that only three of the eight freshmen would travel to games at other colleges, as the school bus had capacity for only 18 players and the two coaches.

Todd put the boys through their drills: dribbling, wind sprints, passing, more wind sprints, and finally juggling—keeping the ball in the air by tapping it with one's knees, feet, shoulders and head. By the end of the day, Jonathan and Charlie were totally exhausted and headed back to their dormitory for socializing and relaxation. They took a roundabout route so that they could admire Cornell's famous gorges. As they looked down into one of the gorges, Charlie observed, "The dormitories may look like England, but the campus is from a different world entirely."

"Agreed," said Jonathan.

The next day saw the boys going through the same drills with their teammates. During the afternoon, Jonathan was working particularly hard on his juggling when Todd came by carrying a soccer ball. "Jonathan, leave your ball and follow me so that we can have a little privacy."

"Sure," said Jonathan.

The two walked far enough away so they were no longer in sight of Jonathan's teammates. "Jonathan," said Todd, "I'd like to teach you the rainbow kick. I want to do it in private because I don't think anyone else on the team will be able to master it and I don't want to embarrass anybody. When you practice it, I want you to work out by yourself.

"What is it?" asked Jonathan, wondering why he was singled out for this experience after less than two days of practice.

Todd replied, "The rainbow kick occurs when a player steps over the soccer ball and then causes the ball to become airborne from behind him. Once in the air, the ball follows an arc over the player's head and lands in front of him and anyone who is defending him. The arc of the ball is what gives the maneuver its name. Let me show you." Todd then put down the ball he was carrying and began to run with the ball. As he did so, he deftly stepped over the ball with his left foot and then, with that same foot, transferred the ball to his right leg in a rolling motion. With his right leg, he then propelled the ball over his head and forward in a nearly perfect arc.

Jonathan watched in utter amazement and then started clapping. "In England, I observed others try that maneuver in practice, but I've never seen it done so well. Where I come from, it's called a reverse flick. Supposedly some of the better players do it, but I've never seen it used in a game."

"Well, Jonathan, you're looking at somebody who used it in a game and scored a very nice goal as a result. I want to see you score in a game in similar fashion. But first you must master it and that's going to take a lot of practice—private practice. Do I make myself clear?"

Excitedly, Jonathan could only respond, "Of course."

The week of soccer practice went by faster than either Jonathan or Charlie might have imagined. Each night they ate dinner, became more familiar with their teammates, and slept more

soundly than they ever had in their lives. Finally, the week of practice was concluded and Nicky Bawlf announced that Jonathan, Charlie and one of the players from Hong Kong would be traveling to games away from campus. Jonathan was delighted at this vote of confidence. However, he had secretly harbored a different fantasy. In the event he didn't make the traveling squad, he would have had time during an away-game weekend to visit Kayla in Montreal. But that was not meant to be, and Jonathan was proud of what he had accomplished.

Soon enough, the rest of the freshman class arrived for three days of orientation. Along with everyone else, Jonathan and Charlie were issued their red Cornell beanies bearing the number 1940, the year of their intended graduation. Charlie was assigned to a room with a boy named Adam Goldfarb who was from the suburbs of Boston and whose father was a prominent physician in the Boston Jewish community. Jonathan was assigned to a room with a boy from Cleveland, Trevor Ames Kantrell III. Trevor had never met a Jewish student, but didn't seem fazed at the prospect of living with Jonathan. Both Trevor's father and grandfather had gone to Cornell, meaning Trevor was a legacy. When Jonathan asked what that meant, Trevor replied that he had been admitted to Cornell largely due to close family members who had gone there.

"That's great," replied Jonathan. "But I'm sure you also had good grades. This place is so famous that everyone must have good grades."

"Don't be too sure," said Trevor. "I came here not because I'm a good student, but because my father got me in and I didn't want to disappoint him. I wanted to go to Ohio State where I could have had a good time and not have been in a pressure cooker. Now that I'm here, I'll admit that I'm more than a little bit nervous."

"What is Ohio State?"

"It's a state university not too far from where I live in Ohio. It's a lot of fun and not as hard as Cornell. My sister goes there

and I've visited her several times. She's in a sorority and the girls there are terrific."

"There are girls here, too."

"Yes, but look around. There are only a few of them and they're all studious. I want college to be fun. You have to travel to Poughkeepsie or Saratoga to meet any fun girls around here."

"How come your sister got a chance to go to Ohio State and you didn't?"

"You aren't serious, are you? She's a girl! Nobody in my prep school went to Ohio State. If I went to Ohio State, my father would never have lived it down at our club!"

"Well, I'm a pretty good student. I'll be happy to help you whenever I can."

"That'd be great. I don't want to disappoint my father, but I'm anxious about having to compete with so many smart classmates. And, please call me Trev."

"Trev, it is. Now let's go downstairs and get some food before the rest of our classmates eat it all."

*****

Jonathan was true to his word and every evening, he spent time with Trev going over his homework. The results both pleased and surprised Trev. By midterm, Trev had registered two C-plusses and three B-minuses—better grades than he had ever expected. Jonathan did not neglect his own studies, of course. When his midterm grades arrived, he had earned three A-minuses and two B-plusses. Charlie, too, had performed well the first semester, with grades almost as good as those earned by Jonathan.

Meanwhile, both Jonathan and Charlie devoted as much time to soccer as their schedules would permit. Weekday practices lasted three hours, excluding the two-mile run that always preceded practice as a warm-up. In addition, Jonathan spent 30 minutes a day practicing the rainbow kick in private. Jonathan was spending so much time on his classwork, helping Trev, and prac-

ticing with the soccer team that he had little spare time. But he did write to Kayla—often, longingly.

In his letters, romantic theme would follow romantic theme. Jonathan always wrote how much he missed Kayla and how wonderful it would be to see her and hold her in his arms. Kayla did not write as often and, when she did, she dutifully expressed admiration for all of Jonathan's accomplishments and allowed that she, too, was busy. Jonathan rode on every word Kayla wrote. Kayla could have given Jonathan a recipe for South African rabbit stew and Jonathan would have rejoiced in her thoughtfulness.

The time came when Jonathan had to advise Kayla that he would be playing soccer during the Thanksgiving weekend and that any trip to Montreal would have to be delayed until the Christmas break. Kayla, understanding girl that she was, held back her disappointment and displayed great patience. She reminded Jonathan that Cornell's Christmas break started earlier than at McGill, but said no more about plans. Jonathan wondered where he would stay in Montreal, but assumed that Kayla would take care of that issue. Jonathan was so charmed by the memory of Kayla and so taken by the understanding she showed in her correspondence that he had no qualms about a trip north without any plans for accommodations.

The soccer team was having a miserable year. However, true to his custom, Nicky Bawlf had stayed with his experienced players for most of the season. But even Nicky had his limits. The next-to-last game of the season was against Syracuse. Just before game time, Nicky approached Jonathan and told him that he was starting him at center midfield in place of one of the team's co-captains, a boy named Hunter. Jonathan looked in Hunter's direction and noted that Hunter was avoiding eye contact. Jonathan was sad for Hunter, but elated at the prospect of starting a game in his freshman year. He was ready and almost yelled it out at the top of his lungs.

Syracuse quickly scored two goals and at the end of the first period, the score remained 2-0 in Syracuse's favor. Josh Williams, the Syracuse midfielder playing opposite Jonathan, was fast, older and experienced. Jonathan was only able to pass the ball laterally to his fellow midfielders, with the result that the ball wasn't being advanced very much. Each time Jonathan tried to move the ball forward, he found Williams getting in his way. On one occasion, Williams stole the ball while Jonathan was dribbling. It was a frustrating time for both Jonathan and his teammates. Then, one of the Cornell players intercepted a pass, waited for a teammate to catch up to him and headed for the Syracuse goal. As the Syracuse goalie came out to meet the Cornell player, cutting down the angle of his shot, the Cornell player, a boy named Landon, deftly passed the ball to his teammate for an unobstructed shot on goal. The score was now 2-1 in favor of Syracuse.

A few minutes later, one of the Cornell players had the wind knocked out of him. It took a minute or so for him to recover. During this time, Jonathan trotted over to the sideline for a drink of water. As he was drinking, Todd walked by and, almost inaudibly, uttered one word to Jonathan: "Rainbow." Jonathan's stomach immediately tightened and his legs felt wobbly. Williams had held him in check the entire game and now Todd wanted Jonathan to pull off one of the most difficult maneuvers in all of soccer against this seemingly implacable opponent. But at this moment Jonathan also thought of Kayla, and knew what he had to do.

The next time Jonathan got the ball, he dribbled a little more slowly than he had during the previous part of the game. Williams, of course, was easily able to keep up with Jonathan's reduced pace. Jonathan passed the ball nonchalantly and feigned frustration at his seeming inability to get the ball past Williams, who assumed that Jonathan was tired and slowing down.

The next time Jonathan received the ball, he again tempered his pace until he was confident that Williams, too, was taking it a

little easier. With a surge, Jonathan accelerated. Williams was off balance and had all he could do to stay in front of Jonathan. Jonathan accelerated more, further challenging the still off-balance Williams. Jonathan continued to pick up speed and, just as Williams seemed to be recovering, Jonathan crossed his left foot over the ball, spun it up his right leg and, from behind, used the heel of his standing leg to lob the ball over both his head and Williams' head. Williams never knew what hit him and, in an instant, Jonathan was running toward the Syracuse goal.

Riotous cheers issued forth from the Cornell bench. Only one Syracuse defender stood in Jonathan's way, but Jonathan was approaching the goal box faster than the defender. As he crossed the 18-yard goal box line, Jonathan squared himself in the direction of the goal and prepared for a clean shot. Suddenly from behind, a Syracuse player stuck his foot underneath Jonathan and intentionally tripped him. Jonathan lost the ball and landed in a thud. His right shoulder hurt as he lay on the field.

Immediately, the referee took a red card from his pocket signaling that the Syracuse player had been thrown out of the game, that Syracuse would have to finish the game a player short and that Cornell would be awarded a penalty kick. The penalty kick meant that one Cornell player, presumably Jonathan, would be shooting against the Syracuse goalie from close range and without any other Syracuse players in the way. But Jonathan was still in pain from the fall and had to be helped off the field, so Cornell's other co-captain was chosen to shoot the penalty kick. He evaluated the Syracuse goalie's position, put the ball in front of him and galloped toward the goal and the goalie. The kick was strong and true, but at the last moment, the Syracuse goalie sprang in the direction of the airborne ball and, with one hand, deflected it over the goal cage. Syracuse went on to win 2-1.

In the locker room, Jonathan's shoulder was evaluated and he was pronounced bruised but sound. Jonathan's teammates all

gathered round and congratulated him on almost having turned the game around. Charlie could not stop himself from jumping up and down and yelling almost at the top of his lungs, "Did you guys see that play?" Todd merely patted Jonathan on the shoulder—his good one.

After things died down, Nicky Bawlf came over and sat next to Jonathan. "I see Todd got to you. This sort of thing happens every couple of years when Todd gets it in his head that one of our players can perform miracles. There's a reason why most players don't try to master the rainbow—it's just too unreliable. But Son, you were unbelievable. You know, they're putting Williams up for All American and he just might get it. Jonathan, you beat the pants off of a damn All American. I just ask one thing: now that our opponents know you have it, use that rainbow kick sparingly. You'll know when to use it next, but don't make it too soon."

Jonathan's shoulder continued to hurt the last game of the season against Haverford so he only played for a few minutes. It was probably a good thing, since Jonathan likely would have been frustrated on the field. Haverford took control of the game from the outset and wound up shutting out the Cornell players 3-0.

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With the soccer season over, Jonathan was able to devote more time to his studies. Though he had been conscientious throughout the semester, the demands on his time had made it difficult to review his work with regularity. Now he got down to the task of going over notes from the earlier part of the semester while keeping up with current laboratory and reading assignments. Jonathan had discovered the main reading room of the law school library—a resplendent 50-foot high Gothic enclosure. He had no interest in the reading room's contents but he loved the scholarly feel of the place, with study tables alternating with stacks of books.

Finally, exam week arrived. After a grueling five days of finals, the first semester at Cornell was over. Jonathan decided to cele-

brate by making a rare and expensive call to Kayla. The call was a decided luxury, but Jonathan thought it was worth it because he felt good about his grades and wanted to let Kayla know when he would arrive. Kayla expressed understandable surprise at the extravagant call and dutifully worked out a time and place for Jonathan to meet her. The sound of Kayla's voice thrilled Jonathan to the soul and his entire being was alive with the excitement of seeing her.

Jonathan hitched an early-morning ride to Syracuse with one of the upperclassmen from the soccer squad. From there, he took the train to Albany and changed trains for Montreal. It was fortunate that he had allowed for plenty of time to get to Montreal at the appointed time, for wintry weather slowed the train. When he arrived in Montreal, the city was decked out for the Christmas season and covered in snow, but Jonathan barely noticed. He found a florist at the train station and bought a bouquet for his sweetheart. A taxicab took him to Kayla's dorm where he introduced himself at the front desk and was told to wait in the parlor.

In short order, Kayla came to the waiting area. Jonathan stood up with the bouquet of flowers in his hand. He looked at Kayla and was filled with joy. She looked more beautiful than he recalled. Her hair was so golden that it seemed to reflect even the dim dormitory lights. She was dressed stylishly and primly, but none of that dampened Jonathan's memory of their time at the beach in Tel Aviv when she had been anything but prim. He was ecstatic with anticipation. Then he noticed that another boy was walking behind Kayla. Somewhat formally, Kayla introduced the other boy as her brother. "Jonathan, it's so good to see you. I would like you to meet my brother, Edgar."

Jonathan was nonplussed because he didn't know how to conduct himself with Edgar present. Not that Jonathan objected, but how could he do anything with Kayla's brother there? Soon enough, Kayla resolved the dilemma by walking toward Jonathan.

Thought Jonathan: *Should I embrace her? Should I kiss her? Should I wait to hold her in my arms until after her brother has gone? There must be a place where they could reunite as lovers. Surely, Kayla had thought of all of these things. She must have, for she, too, has been waiting a very long time for this reunion.* Then, Kayla delicately touched one of Jonathan's cheeks and gently kissed him on the same cheek.

The feel of Kayla's lips on his cheek rendered Jonathan almost dizzy with desire, relief and excitement. As he delighted in the feel of her, Jonathan thought that everything was going to be great. Then, he saw it. It was on the left side of Kayla's sweater, just over the breast Jonathan had once fondled. It was a fraternity pin. He looked at Kayla in confusion and she understood that he had absorbed the meaning of the fraternity pin.

"Jonathan, I wanted to see you one last time. We had such a wonderful time together in Palestine that I couldn't bear to tell you in a letter or even over the phone. Edgar is in a fraternity and early in the semester, he introduced me to one of his fraternity brothers who is a senior and plans to go to law school next fall. We hit it off and, just a few weeks ago, he gave me his fraternity pin. We will get engaged when he graduates this spring and probably marry after his first year of law school. I know this is hard for you, but I want you to know how important you were to me in Palestine and how I'll always remember how you saved my life and how much fun we had together. I hope you're not too disappointed. I never wanted to hurt you. In fact, I would love to hear about what you've been doing if you would consider having dinner with Edgar and me. We can talk about old times. You can stay with Edgar and take the train home in the morning."

Tears welled up in Jonathan's eyes. He didn't want Kayla to see them and he certainly didn't want Edgar to see them. He dropped the bouquet and rushed to the chair where he had left his coat. As he prepared to run out into the cold Montreal air never to see

his beloved again, he heard Kayla yell after him and he looked back for one last time. "Jonathan, remember how you used to tell me that one day you would return to Palestine?" Jonathan could only nod. "Well, I know you will and when you do, there'll be someone waiting for you. I know there will be." Jonathan nodded again and then shuddered deeply as the sadness of the moment and a small gust of frigid wind hit him at the same time.

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Jonathan found his way back to the train station and purchased a ticket to Ithaca. He had no place else to go and he hoped his dormitory had remained open during the holiday break. Due to the weather, the evening train to Albany had been suspended so Jonathan had to stay in the main concourse of the train station that night, alone with his thoughts. Sleep would not come quickly, so he explored the station. As Jonathan walked around, he took in the *bas-relief* friezes on the walls of the main waiting room and anything else that might help him forget what he had just experienced. He knew he must have fallen asleep because he was awakened to the early-morning blare of the overhead speaker system announcing the first trains of the day. Jonathan's train was among the earliest to leave and as soon as it was underway, Jonathan fell fast asleep.

Chapter 2
Lessons Learned
January 1937

Jonathan spent a miserable ten days at Cornell. As soon as he heard Charlie was back, he immediately headed for his dormitory. Charlie was in his room with Adam.

"Hello, Charlie. Hi, Adam. How was your vacation?"

Adam motioned for Charlie to respond. "Tell him, Charlie."

"Jonathan, Adam introduced me to one of the girls from his neighborhood. She goes to Swarthmore and is very liberated. Anyhow, I almost scored. Can you believe it? Two dates and on the third, I got to finger her! From now on, I'm carrying a Trojan with me. Otherwise, I might miss out."

"That's amazing, Charlie. Now I'm really jealous. I spent the vacation getting snubbed by Kayla and then biding my time here."

"Sorry about Kayla. To be honest, I saw it coming. There didn't seem to be enough momentum to keep things going."

"You're probably right, but it was still a terrible letdown and I wish she were still mine. She got pinned to some senior at McGill. How can I compete with a damn senior? But let's get on to happier things. Tell me about this girlfriend of yours."

"Her name is Estelle Shulman. I can't wait to see her again. Adam will tell you, she is a real good looker. Dark eyes, nice chest and she loves to do stuff with guys. I can't wait to see her again and maybe score next time."

"Who wouldn't!"

"Jonathan, have you decided about fraternity rush? Adam's a ZBT legacy because his father was ZBT at Columbia, so we're going to be spending a lot of time at ZBT. Do you want to join us?"

"Of course. But first, I promised Trev I would go with him to the Sigma Chi house. Trev's also a legacy since his father was Sigma Chi here at Cornell. Then, I promised Jim Kelly on the soccer team that I would go with him to the Theta Delta Chi house where Jim's older brother, Henry, is a Thumpty."

Adam had remained smugly silent during the conversation about Estelle, it being Adam's view—and a correct one no doubt—that without saying a word, he was the man of the hour for almost having gotten his roommate laid. Now, however, he felt the need to speak. "Jonathan, why are you bothering to visit Sigma Chi and Theta Delta Chi? Those two are among the most gentile fraternities on campus. They don't want to have anything to do with us Jews."

"I guess I've heard that, but both Trev and Jim were confident the Sigma Chi and Thumpty brothers would like me. I thought I would give it a try. I'll still join up with you two at Zeta Beta Tau."

"Okay," said Adam. "But I think you're spinning your wheels. In any event, Charlie and I will lay the groundwork for you at ZBT so that when you do get there, the brothers will be excited to meet you."

"That's great," said Jonathan. "I'd better get back to my dormitory and see if Trev has arrived. When he left for Christmas break, he was feeling good about his grades. His parents told him he could rush fraternity only if he got a 2.5. By the way, did you two get your grades?"

"Yes," said Charlie. "It seems Adam and I are in lockstep. We each scored a 3.4. Adam's parents think he can do better, particularly since he's pre-med. But I'm pretty pleased with my grades. How about you, Jonathan?"

"I haven't picked them up yet, but going into exams, I had about a 3.6."

"That's great. You always were the better student—slightly, of course."

"Thanks. I'll see the two of you at the ZBT house later this week."

When Jonathan arrived back at his dormitory room, an upbeat Trev greeted him. "Hello, Jonathan. Hope you had a great vacation. I had fun getting together with some of my old prep school classmates and checking in on a couple of old girlfriends. But guess what?"

"What?"

"Thanks to you, I had a 2.62 average and you and I are going to rush Sigma Chi."

"That's terrific, Trev." Hesitatingly, Jonathan added, "Charlie's roommate, Adam, seems to think that a Jew rushing a gentile fraternity is a waste of time."

"Jonathan, I'm a damn legacy. My father was a fucking brother right here at Cornell. They are going to love anybody I bring with me. Come on. We'll have a good time. You'll be well treated and they'll love you, particularly after I tell them how you pulled me through the semester. I promise you."

"Okay, Trev. Are you interested in checking out the Thumpties with Jim Kelly?"

"I don't think so. I'm a Sigma Chi. My father has been talking about it all of my life. If I were to back off of Sigma Chi in favor of Theta Delta Chi, my father would kill me. Let's get something to eat."

The following evening, Jonathan and Trev made their way to Cayuga Heights Road where the Sigma Chi house was located. Built in 1913 out of local grey stone, the house, aptly called Greystone, had once belonged to silent film star Irene Castle and her second husband, Robert E. Treman, who had graduated from Cornell in 1909. No expense had been spared in the construction of the building and it was beautiful from front to back. Though difficult to appreciate in the dead of winter, the back of the house featured well-maintained gardens and one of Ithaca's first swimming pools.

Trev and Jonathan entered the wood-paneled foyer of the splendid building and were immediately greeted by two brothers

who identified themselves as Ken Sutherland and Wentworth "Whinney" Richardson. The brothers handed Jonathan and Trev a cup of spiked punch and invited them into Greystone's great room. Jonathan was accustomed to beautiful rooms, having spent three years at St Paul's and much of the first semester in the law library reading room, but he was still awed at the grandeur of his current surroundings. Large enough to serve as a ballroom, it boasted an impressive wood-paneled ceiling with rafters made of Ethiopian cherry wood.

Keith and Whinney immediately noticed Jonathan's accent and asked him about his schooling in England. Without trying to impress his interlocutors, Jonathan told them about his past, how he had gotten to England, his stay in Palestine, his time at St Paul's, his soccer prowess and his recruitment to Cornell. Trev stood by without saying much as Jonathan regaled his listeners with stories about the quaint traditions at St Paul's and his adventures in the Levant. And when Jonathan told Keith and Whinney that he was pre-med and was hoping for at least a 3.6 cumulative average, the two Sigma Chi brothers appeared to be putty in Jonathan's hands.

Keith and Whinney then introduced Jonathan and Trev to Jefferson McMillan, the president of the house, who took the two recruits into Greystone's library where the three of them enjoyed a good cigar—Jonathan's first smoke since Charlie and he had explored the tobacco-rich cargo hold during their voyage from Hamburg. The three then indulged in a bit of sherry.

Jonathan was smitten and it seemed the same was true of each of the Sigma Chi brothers who had had the opportunity to meet him. Jonathan felt as if he was in a dream. He imagined himself living in this magnificent house and enjoying the benefits of this most distinguished of fraternities. From what he observed and from the way the Sigma Chi brothers reacted to him, Jonathan had no reason to believe this vision of the future would be anything but a reality.

The next evening, Jim Kelly came by and Jonathan and Jim made their way to 800 University Avenue, home of the Theta Delta Chi fraternity, or Thumpty, as it was known. The walk was a short one as the Thumpty house was located not far from Jonathan's dormitory. Theta Delta Chi had been founded at Cornell in 1870, just a few years after Cornell's own founding. The house, built in 1928, was a magnificent stone, wood and stucco Tudor structure with a beautiful slate roof. The stone used in the construction had come from Italy.

Jonathan and Jim entered the house by way of the portico in the front and were immediately greeted by Jim's brother, Stanton. The brothers gave one another a manly hug and Stanton went to get drinks for the three of them. While Stanton was away, Jonathan took in the surroundings and, once again, found himself amidst wood-paneled stateliness. There was even a stained-glass window that displayed the Thumpty coat of arms. Jonathan began to wonder whether he should hold off committing to Sigma Chi, and perhaps give Theta Delta Chi a chance. Jonathan thoughts were interrupted as Stanton cordially offered him a drink.

"It's so good to meet you. Jim has told me a lot about you, including the fact that you are one hell of a soccer player."

"Jim is pretty good in his own right," replied Jonathan earnestly.

"Of course. You may not know it, but I am also involved in sports here at Cornell. As an athlete, I know that certain players rise to the top and Jim says you are one of those players."

"Thanks. What do you play?"

"Lacrosse. It's probably a less-followed sport than even soccer. It takes a lot of stamina and skill."

"I know that," said Jonathan. "Your team often practices near ours and your players really do work hard."

"So, what do you think of our house?"

"It's beautiful. I have to say I'm quite impressed."

"Don't judge us just by our appearance; judge us by who we are. In addition to attracting the best-looking girls to our parties, we have a lot to be proud of. One of our alums, John A. Dix, was governor of New York. Come on, let's meet our chapter president and a few of the brothers."

The Thumpty brothers were not only an impressive looking lot, but they were also pleasant. Jonathan was sure he was making a fine impression, as well. By the end of the evening, he was undecided as to whether he would choose Sigma Chi or Theta Delta Chi. Jim and Jonathan had a parting nightcap with Stanton and the two boys made their way back to Jonathan's dormitory where Trev, Jonathan and Jim spent much of the remaining evening discussing the virtues of Sigma Chi versus Thumpty.

The following evening, Jonathan went to see Charlie and Adam before heading to the ZBT house with them. Charlie and Adam had spent most of the preceding two nights talking and drinking with the ZBT brothers and both were feeling good about Charlie's prospects. As promised, Charlie and Adam had told the brothers about Jonathan and many of them were looking forward to meeting him.

Jonathan asked Charlie what he thought of ZBT and Charlie said he really liked the brothers. Jonathan volunteered that he really liked both Sigma Chi and Theta Delta Chi and couldn't decide which one he would accept. Adam suggested that Jonathan keep that little bit of information to himself when the three boys went over to the ZBT house later that evening. "Jonathan, I'm glad you had a good time at Sigma Chi and Theta Delta Chi. The brothers at ZBT know you've been there, but they're not that interested. If word got out that you seriously believed you would receive an invitation to join one of those two houses, the ZBT brothers might think you were gullible, impressionable or both. None of them ever received a pledge offer from one of the gentile houses when going through fraternity rush."

Feeling exasperated, Jonathan merely nodded. He knew he had made an effective impression with both Sigma Chi and Thumpty and that the hard part would be making up his mind. He didn't want to upset Charlie and Adam, so Jonathan expressed his thanks and the three of them headed to the ZBT house. The evening was well lit by the moon and as the three boys approached the ZBT house, the outline of the Tudor-style structure came into focus. It wasn't Greystone, but the ZBT house was a pleasant, if not handsome, dwelling. More impressively, the moonlight illuminating the back of the house revealed a deep gorge that descended from the back yard. In the distance, even by moonlight, one could also detect the outlines of the city of Ithaca and Cayuga Lake. Jonathan imagined the view would be stunning during the day and he was now intrigued.

As the three walked through the ZBT front entrance, they were greeted by several brothers who treated Charlie and Adam like close relatives. One put his arm around Charlie and said, "Hello, Charlie. I assume this is your fellow Brit, back from the gentile fraternity wars!"

"Yes," said Charlie. "Marshall Katz, I'd like you to meet Jonathan Sternbloom. Jonathan, meet Marshall."

"Nice to meet you," said Jonathan. "I've heard so much about the ZBT house and I'm so glad to be here this evening."

Another brother, Irving Simonson, immediately piped in by saying he'd heard so much about Jonathan and was pleased to meet him in the flesh. "I hope you've gotten the gentile houses out of your system and can now get down to business."

"Of course," said Jonathan, dutifully following the script suggested by Adam and Charlie. As he responded, he detected an aroma that was at once pleasing and mysterious. Jonathan realized the aroma was ubiquitous in the ZBT house and seemed to be associated with the brothers themselves. It smelled a little like perfume. Thought Jonathan, *could it be that the brothers were wearing*

perfume? Yes, they must be wearing perfume for men. It's a nice touch. I'll have to ask about it after I leave this evening. I wonder if there are other surprises in store for me.

Indeed, there were several other surprises in store. Jonathan learned that ZBT had been founded around the turn of the century by a New York City professor who was, like Jonathan, a Zionist. Jonathan also found out that ZBT was one of the fraternities that had assisted in bringing young German refugees to America so that they could study at American universities like Cornell. The ZBT brothers were wild about soccer and had done well in the inter-fraternity soccer league. But mostly, he found the brothers shared a worldview that mirrored his own. They certainly liked girls, but they were motivated to do well academically so that they could succeed in a religiously challenging world upon the completion of their college years. And they were much more concerned about the mistreatment of Germany's Jews than was true of any of the boys at Sigma Chi or Thumpty, most of whom had no interest in or concern about the subject.

In due course, Jonathan was provided with a cigar and a glass of port. He was surrounded by new faces eager to hear about his time in Palestine and what he thought about the Nazis. Jonathan told them everything he knew about the plight of Germany's Jews. By the time Jonathan told his attentive listeners about the fate of his mother, the brothers were totally absorbed.

After what seemed like a few minutes but what in fact had turned into a few hours, Marshall and Irving asked Jonathan to join them in a quiet corner of the parlor room. "Jonathan," said Marshall, "I won't beat around the bush. I'm the pledge master this year and I would love to have you in this year's pledge class. I know Irving agrees. Irving is our vice-president and next year will likely be president. If he likes a pledge, the rest is just a formality."

"I'm not sure I agree with Marshall's assessment of my authority," said Irving. "But I do agree with his assessment of our desire

to have you in our pledge class. We would consider ourselves lucky if we landed Charlie, Adam and you in the same class. When you go home tonight, please know you have many new friends here at ZBT, all of whom would like to call you a brother."

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After pledge week, expectant second-term freshmen fidgeted in their dormitory rooms as they waited for bids from the fraternities of their choice. By custom, the fraternity rush chairmen would deliver the invitations by hand. Those who were legacies could confidently go about their business, knowing that they were guaranteed a pledge slot. But even for them, the anticipation of receiving an engraved invitation from the rush chairman of their family's fraternity was a special moment. So it was that Trev and Jonathan sat in their fraternity room, eagerly awaiting the expected knocks on their door.

Jonathan was of two minds—something he had not even shared with Charlie. Jonathan felt comfortable with the ZBT house and could easily see himself there. But he was also intrigued by the prestige and splendor of the Thumpty house. Jonathan did not know what he would do if he received bids from both houses. However, he was eager—almost desperate—to receive both bids. Jonathan was also hoping to receive a bid from Sigma Chi, though that was his third choice. A bid from Thumpty and Sigma Chi would validate Jonathan's arrival in the eyes of both the gentile and Jewish communities at Cornell.

The first knock on the door arrived shortly after three in the afternoon. Trev opened the door and was greeted by a smiling Timothy Green, rush chairman and pledge master for Sigma Chi. Timothy handed Trev an envelope and then expressed his congratulations. Trev opened the envelope with anticipation, while Jonathan looked on with more than mild disappointment. *He had made such a good impression on the Sigma Chi brothers,* he thought, *and Trev had hardly said a word. How was it that Trev was receiving*

a pledge bid and he was not? What more could he have done? Or was it true, as Adam had suggested, that Greek life at Cornell was divided into two worlds—gentile and Jewish? Well, there was always Thumpty!

Jonathan's thoughts were interrupted by a second knock on the door. There stood Marshall Katz with an envelope in his hand and a broad grin on his face. Marshall embraced Jonathan as he handed him the envelope. Marshall said, "Jonathan, as I told you when we met at the ZBT house, we would love to have you in our pledge class. The first meeting is this Sunday at 3:00 PM." With that, Marshall was off to his next destination.

At length, there was another knock. This time it was Stanton Kelly, Jim's brother, with an envelope in his hand. Jonathan knew Stanton was not the pledge master or the rush chairman at Thumpty and was a little surprised to see him standing in the doorway. He speculated that Thumpty personalized the delivery of their bids when a candidate knew someone in the fraternity. Jonathan put on his best smile and was about to invite Stanton in when the latter handed Jonathan the envelope and peremptorily turned around and left.

Still surprised and feeling uncertain, Jonathan tremulously opened the envelope. Inside, he found a letter from Alex Grayson, president of Thumpty. Jonathan read the letter.

Dear Jonathan:

I wanted you to know how much we at Theta Delta Chi enjoyed meeting you. You were one of the most impressive young men we met and many of the brothers, myself included, would have been happy to call you brother. However, the national fraternity has a strict policy against pledging Jews. I wish it weren't so, but that is the way it is. I even called national headquarters and asked the president if an exception could be made.

I was told the policy was strict and no exception could be made. I was even told we would jeopardize our standing with the national fraternity if we were to pledge you. So unfortunately, we have no choice. I am writing to emphasize how much we all liked you, to wish you well wherever you pledge, and to let you know you are always welcome at the Thumpty house.

Sincerely, Alex Grayson

So, it really was true, thought Jonathan resignedly, as he showed the letter to Trev. Jonathan thought to himself, *Well, I always have ZBT,* but somehow the thought was not that comforting.

Trev came to the rescue. Putting an arm around his roommate's shoulder, Trev acknowledged it was a lousy deal. "But, look at me," intoned Trev. "Just my being here has been a lousy deal. Nobody said life was fair. In my case, I'm going to be stuck in my father's shadow and buried under my father's bankroll for the rest of my life. You, at least, are your own man. You have a fraternity that wants you. Most importantly, you have the rest of your life to gain respect for who you are, irrespective of your religious stock."

Jonathan looked at his roommate with new admiration. "Trev, I believe you're right. Let's have a great pledge semester, you at Sigma Chi and me at ZBT."

Chapter 3
Pledging Fraternity
January–June 1937

Jonathan, Adam and Charlie were among 30 Jewish freshman who met the following Sunday at the ZBT house. The brothers greeted the pledges warmly and handed each a glass of champagne to toast the new pledge class. Jonathan looked around at the cheerful scene and admitted to himself he could be very happy in this fraternity. He sought out Adam and Charlie, and the three of them shared a toast to their success as fraternity men.

Marshall Katz then greeted the pledges and briefed his charges on what they could expect during the semester. After the champagne had been consumed and without a word of warning, Marshall handed each pledge a mop or a broom and directed them to start cleaning the fraternity house. Some of the pledges were amused and some were nervous, but all approached the task in good humor. Except that good humor did not appear to be enough. Almost every five minutes, one brother or another would yell at the pledges for being lazy and, with equal frequency, another brother would demand that the pledges drop down and do push-ups as penance for their laziness. By the time the pledges were excused, it was well into the evening.

When Jonathan returned to his dormitory room he was exhausted and, even worse, he was behind in his homework. The pledges had been exhorted to come to the fraternity house as often as possible. Jonathan was of a different mind. If that afternoon's experience was destined to repeat itself each time he went to the fraternity house, he would have to keep his visits to a minimum. Otherwise, neither he nor his studies might weather the experience.

Soon Trev arrived, and Jonathan and Trev compared their experiences. They were similar. However, unlike Jonathan's reaction to what he considered wasted time doing push-ups and wielding a mop, Trev seemed to be in his element. "You know," said Trev, "this place could actually turn out to be fun!"

In the days and weeks that followed, Jonathan found himself enjoying the ZBT house. He liked the members of his pledge class and he had fun bantering with some of the brothers. There was also something else—something Jonathan had never experienced.

At St Paul's, Charlie and he had been among the few Jews. And, they had felt it. Indeed, it had been the concerned director of sport who had suggested that Jonathan might not want to wear the Star of David that hung around his neck, lest some of the other boys on the football team feel uncomfortable or take offense. Jonathan had agreed, but it had left him with a feeling of emptiness. His mother had given the star to Jonathan the last day he had seen her alive—the day they had taken her to the train station. The star had belonged to her father and she had given it to Jonathan as she packed for her ill-fated trip.

Jonathan had tucked the star away and had not thought about it for a while. Now, he was with young men who thought nothing of wearing Stars of David around their necks. Happily, he had sought out his grandfather's star from his belongings. Once he found it, he sat down and reflected on his mother, who had been out of his life for so many years but was still so much a part of his thoughts. He admired the six-pointed star. It had been hammered out of silver and was beaded around the edges. In the middle, the Hebrew letters *chet* and *yud* represented the word for "life." He thought about the two letters then thought about his mother some more. Finally, he put the star around his neck. He rejoiced in the feel of it.

Jonathan had pulled a 3.6 cumulative average the first semester, and he had no intention of letting it slip by spending unnec-

essary time at the fraternity house. At first, Trev felt the same and the two of them met nightly so Jonathan could help Trev with his assignments. As time went on, however, the study sessions were beginning to wane. Even more alarmingly, Trev was returning to the dormitory later and later and, on occasion, did not return to the room until daybreak.

One night, when Trev returned to the dormitory at his now habitually late hour, Jonathan, who had been staying up to study for an exam, confronted his roommate. "What the hell do you think you're doing? You're coming home from the fraternity house later and later and I can tell you're not opening your books!"

"Don't worry. It's only for the time being. I'm hoping to be named *Best Pledge* and already several of the brothers have told me I'm in the lead. It takes a lot of time and effort, but I think I am now solidly positioned to win. So, I can soon get back to my studies. You'll see; I'll be coming back to the room earlier and I'll catch up." But Trev didn't. He continued to return to the dormitory late into the night, and the study sessions became a thing of the past.

Then one evening, Jonathan arrived back from the fraternity house late and found his dormitory room empty. An open envelope and its contents lay on the floor. Jonathan reached down to pick up the envelope and saw that it was from the vice-provost for student affairs. Holding his breath, Jonathan picked up the letter and began reading.

Dear Mr. Kantrell:

Despite having issued you two prior warnings, it has again come to my attention that you have ceased attending classes this semester, have failed to hand in any of your assignments and have not taken any of your exams. Under the circumstances, this office has no choice but to suspend you from this institution for a period of one full year.

> If, during that period, you have demonstrated both proper contrition and a proper dedication to your scholarly responsibilities, you may be readmitted with second-semester freshman status. The decision to readmit will be solely at the discretion of this office.

Jonathan worriedly dragged himself into bed, wondering what had become of his roommate. When morning arrived, Jonathan's senses were on high alert. He raced down the stairs to the room occupied by the chief resident of the dormitory. Jonathan tried not to knock on the door too loudly or too frantically, but his racing adrenalin would not permit restraint. After a moment or two, a tired-looking graduate student of 23 came to the door wondering what was causing so much noise so early in the morning.

Jonathan apologized for the noise and launched into a series of inquiries regarding his roommate. The chief resident, whose name was Stuart Templeton, invited Jonathan in and asked him to take a seat. "Jonathan, I'm sorry to be the one to break the news to you about Trev. He's okay; that is to say, he's alive. But, he's not in good shape!"

"What do you mean?" asked Jonathan, his concern mounting with every word.

"I mean this: Trev apparently had allowed his studies to slide. Yesterday, he received a hand-delivered letter from the vice-provost advising him that he was being suspended for a year."

"Yes, I saw the opened letter on the floor of our room when I arrived home late last night."

"Of course, you know Trev was pledging Sigma Chi and was on route to being named *Best Pledge*, which is quite an honor."

"I know," responded Jonathan, beginning to feel impatient.

"Yesterday, after receiving the letter, Trev went to the Sigma Chi house as usual. He didn't tell anybody about the letter. Ap-

parently, however, he behaved erratically, telling everyone that his life was over because his father was going to kill him. Trev's behavior concerned the Sigma Chi brothers enough so that two of them, one a football player, followed Trev home when he left the Sigma Chi house yesterday evening."

"Poor Trev!"

"Indeed. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary on the walk back until Trev got to the Thurston Avenue Bridge over the Fall Creek Gorge."

"What happened then?" asked Jonathan, now standing and looking at Stuart with increasing alarm.

"Trev was walking across the bridge. He stopped suddenly and stared out into the dark from behind the guardrail. The two following brothers became alarmed. They decided to break their cover and approach Trev."

"Did Trev see them?"

"No. Trev's back was to the bridge bed, so he could not see the approaching brothers. Trev was in the process of boosting himself up over the guardrail."

"That's terrible."

"It was. Luckily, the two brothers had already broken into a run and, just as Trev was about to lift himself over the guardrail and plunge to his almost-certain death, one of the brothers hauled him back. Trev put up a fight, but he was no match for the two brothers, particularly the football player. Once Trev had calmed down, the brothers took him to the hospital where he has been under watch. The university notified his father and he should arrive early this evening to take Trev home. It's very sad."

"Do you know if Trev can have visitors?"

"He is being kept under watch with no friends permitted. Even his Sigma Chi rescuers have been asked to stay away. I don't even know if he will come back to the dormitory to collect his belongings or if his father will arrange to have them shipped."

Jonathan was sitting down again. Emotions rushed through him. He thought to himself: *Trev never wanted to be at this school, great as it is. In fraternity life, he had found an outlet, but it almost killed him.* He thought about how manipulated Trev felt when he first arrived at school and how defeated he must have felt when he received the suspension notice. *I guess I may never know*, he concluded.

In fact, Jonathan was never to know. As Stuart had surmised, Trev's father took his son directly home to Cleveland two days later, without Jonathan having a chance to say goodbye. After Trev's belongings had been removed, a shaken Jonathan sat in his quiet room pondering the events of the past few days. Unlike Trev, he was delighted to be at Cornell, so his path was entirely different. With that thought, Jonathan opened his assignment book and started the three days of homework assignments he had ignored since discovering Trev's failure to return to the dormitory.

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Trev's depression and suicide attempt had persuaded Jonathan to adhere to his original game plan and spend as little time at the fraternity house as the brothers and convention would permit. Jonathan missed Trev, but appreciated the solitude of the room and its conduciveness to stolen moments of study. Jonathan had long since caught up on his schoolwork, and his grades reflected his industriousness. He was beginning to feel he had struck a happy balance between his studies and his obligations as a pledge. Then, the first week in May arrived—the week known as *Hell Week*. It connoted the last week of pledging and the host of indignities to which pledges of all fraternities would be subjected prior to being initiated as brothers.

At ZBT, *Hell Week* began on a Sunday and continued through the following Saturday when those pledges who made it through the week would become full-fledged brothers. Rarely had a pledge not completed *Hell Week*, but there had been instances. So, it was

taken very seriously by the pledges. But, none of the pledges had any inkling of what awaited them on Saturday, at the end of the week.

About 9:00 that evening, Marshall Katz gathered his weary charges in the basement where exercise mats had been placed on the floor, enough to enable all the pledges to lie down comfortably. Marshall then addressed the bewildered pledges. "Gentlemen, you've come far since your first days as pledges. But to prove yourselves, there is one more ritual you must undergo. Each of you, please undress down to your underwear and lie down on a mat. I'll take care of the rest."

Slowly, a few of the braver pledges took off their shoes, socks, shirts and pants. Then, a few more followed. Finally, all 30 underwear-clad pledges lay on the mats, looking up at the ceiling. When the pledges were properly positioned, Marshall summoned all the brothers, who casually took their places in the free space around the mats. Many were snickering, but not a word was said

Suddenly, the door opened and in walked Celeste, a 5-foot-6 redhead, stark naked except for high heels. The brothers cheered and even some of the pledges began to whoop it up. Celeste was amply endowed with large freckled breasts, nipples that pointed straight out and a pubic area with a large swath of curly red hair. She wasn't stunning and she wasn't young but, at that place and in the presence of the stunned pledges, she was a force of nature. Celeste smiled at the brothers and then began to walk languidly around the room, making sure each pledge got a clear view. No pledge moved, except for the profusion of underwear bulges that began to show up on each mat.

Slyly, Marshall spoke. "Okay, gentlemen, can you now guess the nature of the ritual that awaits you?"

Some pledges looked at Marshall sheepishly, but others began to smile. Marshall took in all of their expressions and responded with a big toothy grin, "I see some of you have figured out what

is happening. For the rest of you poor unfortunates, allow me to explain. At ZBT, we take it as a badge of honor that no pledge will have to undergo the indignity of being a virgin at the time of his induction. To make sure all of you will have experienced carnal sin before you are inducted, we have asked Celeste and one of her friends to pay us a visit. We will give you a few minutes to think about it. Then, two at a time, you will be invited into the back room where you will see that two sets of curtains have been set up. Behind one set of curtains, some of you will find Celeste, still naked. Behind the other, the rest of you will find her voluptuous friend who will also be naked. Each will have an ample supply of condoms and each is well schooled at making your first experience a most enjoyable one. Do I make myself clear?"

An enthusiastic volley of "Yes, Sirs" erupted from the pledges. True to Marshall's word, after about ten minutes, the pledges were invited, two at a time, to enter the back room and experience the promised delights. Because the pledges were called up alphabetically, Jonathan's name did not come up until near the end. By then, however, he had seen almost 20 of his fellow pledges return from the back room with satisfied smiles on their faces. He couldn't wait.

Jonathan was directed to the curtain on the right. When he entered, he found Celeste lying on a mattress. She was toweling herself and looked up at Jonathan almost offhandedly. "You're a nice looking young man. What's your name?" As if burdened by an inquiry so complex that no answer would suffice, Jonathan could only stammer out his name. "Ah, yes, I've heard about you. The soccer player, or should I say soccer star? I've been waiting for you. Would you like to come in and enjoy the pleasures of my boudoir?"

Jonathan had been more than ready. But as soon as Celeste mentioned Jonathan's success on the soccer field, he found himself put off. Celeste immediately sensed she had said the wrong thing

and lost no time in rectifying the situation. She got up, put her arms around Jonathan and slowly moved her hips in a way that placed her in contact with Jonathan. She then lowered both Jonathan and herself on to the mattress. "Now, feel yourself inside of me and move with me as I move back and forth."

Jonathan, whose excitement was mounting feverishly, did as he was told. He had never experienced anything like this. After a few strokes, he gave himself over to the wonder of it. Before long, his body stiffened and he felt a wave of delight. After they were finished, Celeste kissed Jonathan on his forehead and he blushed—the blush of a boy who now found himself, at least in sexual terms, a man.

Chapter 4
Summer in Europe and a Flame Ignited
June–August 1937

After Hell Week, the semester ended. As ZBT brothers, Jonathan and Charlie had the option to live in the fraternity house the following fall. Charlie chose to do so, but Jonathan elected to remain in the dormitory. As a returning sophomore, Jonathan had first claim on dormitory housing and he chose a single room in the Hans Bethe house next to the War Memorial.

Both boys had made the transition from Hell Week to study week with surprising ease, and both completed their first year at Cornell with fine grades. Indeed, Jonathan's grades were exceptional—an achievement he wanted to maintain his sophomore year and, therefore, one that entered into his thinking about remaining in one of the dormitories.

Long before the end of the semester, the boys had decided to return to England for the summer so they could see their families and play soccer at a high level in the English Football Association leagues. The trip planning brought back appreciative memories of Mrs. Zorrofsky, as the boys could not have made such a trip were it not for the money from her estate. As school ended, they purchased Cornell memorabilia—pennants, pictures of the Baker Dormitories and War Memorial, freshman beanies and white boat neck sweaters, emblazoned with large red Cornell "Cs." Instead of hitching a ride to Syracuse and taking the train to New York City from there, they decided to take the more roundabout, but

also scenic, Black Diamond Train operated by the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

On a bright summer day, the boys waited for the Black Diamond, which had been delayed on its route from Buffalo. Finally, the train arrived. Once it lumbered to a stop, the boys loaded their bags and chose seats with the best views. Soon the train was off again, making tracks southeast to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. From there, it hastened through the Susquehanna and Lehigh valleys and then on to New York City's Penn Station.

In New York, the boys found inexpensive lodging and took in the wonders of the metropolis they had been unable to explore on their arrival. Two days later, they were on their way to England.

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Summer in London proved to be all the boys had hoped for and more. They enjoyed being with their families, visiting St Paul's and some of their classmates, and playing a high caliber of football. Wherever they went, people wanted to know about Cornell and the United States. *Was the depression as deep in the States as it was in Europe? How successful were Roosevelt's economic programs? Was the United States truly isolationist? What was Roosevelt's attitude toward what was going on in Germany? If war came to Europe as many feared, would the United States enter the fray?*

Other than addressing questions regarding Cornell and soccer, neither boy was in a position to answer questions about life in America, let alone domestic and foreign policy. They had spent their time in America in exquisite isolation—studying, of course, but having little time or interest to observe the cares, concerns and proclivities of the nation around them. Still, they delighted in their newly-acquired limelight and did their best to sound authoritative when the situation allowed.

As the summer was concluding, Jonathan felt an urge to see some of Europe. He broached the idea to Charlie, who immedi-

ately expressed enthusiasm. But where should they go? Germany was out of the question, of course, and so were Spain and Italy, where fascism had taken hold. In the end, the boys decided to travel through France, then up through the lowland countries and on to Denmark where they would stay with Lorenz and Agatha Kreisler and Charlie's cousins, Sarah and Werner.

Charlie had not seen his cousins since just before meeting Jonathan aboard ship and the prospect of visiting the Kreislers was exciting. Armed with presents provided by their parents as well as the last remnants of their Cornell souvenirs, Jonathan and Charlie made their way to Copenhagen by way of two memorable weeks visiting Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.

They arrived in Copenhagen on a hot August afternoon and were greeted at the train station by the entire Kreisler clan. Lorenz was a civil engineer. In Germany, he had worked on the construction of the new Reich highway system, enabling him to traverse the country without interference. After Hannah's disappearance, Saundra and Giles had asked Lorenz to take advantage of his mobility to confirm their suspicions of what had happened to Hannah. Lorenz had confirmed that Hannah was dead. Though a bitter pill for Anton, Lorenz's report had provided closure and, equally importantly, the opportunity for Anton to reclaim his life and marry Vanessa.

Ever since taking on the responsibility of finding out about Hannah, Lorenz had felt a strong connection to Anton. The whole Kreisler family had been delighted the previous fall when Anton had visited them in Denmark in conjunction with a paper he had presented at the fourth assembly of the International Congress of Linguists. Now, the family was eager to meet Jonathan. Of course, they were even more excited to see Charlie after a four-year hiatus.

Werner, his dark bangs almost covering his eyes, and Sarah, her blond hair that favored her father blowing in the gentle breeze, rushed to Charlie. Before Charlie could say anything, Werner

jumped on his cousin and was holding Charlie around the neck. Sarah joined in by hugging Charlie, even while Werner was still hanging on. Charlie could only stammer a few words, but it was clear that he loved the attention.

The two children then turned to Jonathan who had been looking on with admiration at the display of affection. "Welcome to Denmark," said Sarah, as she gaily curtsied for Jonathan with all the allure her 14 years could muster.

"Thank you," said Jonathan, his attention now focused on the pretty blonde-haired girl who had just charmed him with her welcoming bow. Sarah blushed and gave an additional curtsy. Werner said nothing, but decided that Jonathan was fair game and jumped up on him. Finally, Werner let go and Charlie and Jonathan brought out the presents from their parents and the souvenirs they had brought from Cornell. Charlie gave Werner a pennant and a Cornell beanie. Jonathan had planned on giving Agatha the oversized boat neck sweater he had brought but on impulse, gave it to Sarah who responded appreciatively with yet another curtsy.

Lorenz asked about Anton and Vanessa and was pleased to hear they were doing well. Then, looking at Charlie, Lorenz asked, "How are your parents and your brother?"

"Fine," said Charlie. "Mother looks quite fit and keeps occupied. Father still enjoys his work at the museum, although the government has been forced to cut his staff owing to the Depression."

"How about Randy?"

"You probably know that my brother and I have never been that close. In addition, my parents and Randy had a falling out. So, none of us have seen much of Randy this summer. But I'm hoping to be in touch with him again before I go."

"Over what did the falling out occur?"

Charlie rolled his eyes to emphasize the silliness of the dispute, then replied. "Randy had been studying architecture at UCL's

Bartlett School and had a little over a year to go before beginning his master's degree in naval architecture, his chosen specialty. But, as you know, Randy has always had a flair for the dramatic and has a great singing voice."

"Yes, of course."

"He finally gave in to the sirens that were beckoning him and decided he wanted to switch majors to theater and voice. My parents believed that such a new pursuit would be a dead end for Randy and got into a big fight with him. Ultimately, Randy moved out of the house and has been performing with a small repertory theater in London. The one time I did see Randy this summer was at a performance. I actually thought he was pretty good."

"Your parents must feel awful," injected Agatha.

"They do feel terrible and have agreed to resume paying for Randy's schooling, even if he wishes to be a theater major. However, Randy is being stubborn and so far, there has been no rapprochement. But I'm pretty sure the episode will blow over and that Randy will resume his studies. I wouldn't even be a bit surprised if he returned to architecture."

"I hope you're right. I'm sorry to hear about the falling out. How do your parents feel about you going to school in America?"

"There's no issue. My parents clearly miss me and I miss them. But in truth, I think they would prefer Randy were in America with me, as much as they would miss both of us."

Looking perplexed, Lorenz responded, "I'm a little surprised at that."

"You shouldn't be. You've been in touch with my father. He believes Europe is a powder keg just waiting to be ignited."

"I have to agree with him. It hasn't been easy for any country since the Great War, particularly since the onset of the Depression. There is unrest everywhere. Socialism threatens from the East. People are unemployed and many are hungry. Governments have spent money they don't have trying to keep their restive people

fed. Repressive regimes exist in Italy, Spain and Germany. Hitler keeps talking about the need to find additional room for the German people and recently he decided to intervene in the war in Spain. The whole thing threatens to boil over at any moment, particularly for the Jews. That, of course, is why we're here."

At this point, Jonathan sat up and entered the conversation. "My father and I were talking about Spain before we left. My father said the *Luftwaffe* has been assisting Franco's Nationalist troops and has been responsible for brutal aerial attacks on the civilian population of northern Spain."

"You're referring to the Basque town of Guernica that Hitler's planes bombed back in March. It was awful. The town was destroyed and one-third of its 5,000 people were killed. Hospitals were leveled and, after the raid, only one church remained."

"Does Hitler's involvement mean that the Spanish conflict will boil over into the rest of Europe?"

"Maybe at some point. But for now, my friends in Germany tell me Hitler does not want a European war because his military is not at the desired strength. They feel, however, that war is likely if not inevitable and that forays, such as Hitler's aerial attacks in Spain, will only hasten the process."

The conversation went long into the night, but eventually Agatha pleaded with Lorenz to allow their tired guests to get some rest. Jonathan and Charlie gratefully made their way to the sleeping quarters that had been prepared for them.

They spent the next day touring castles in the countryside and they spent the day after in the city and on the waterfront. Sarah and Werner joined their parents and their two guests during both days' outings. Both children were patient, but their interest was focused entirely on the evening of the second day and their planned visit to the Tivoli Gardens. Built in 1874, Tivoli was the second oldest amusement park in the world and the most beautiful. The park featured a lake, beautiful gardens, an outdoor the-

ater, the *Pantomimeteateret*, in which pantomime was performed, and a variety of amusement park rides, including a merry-go-round, bumper cars, a wooden roller coaster, the *Rutschebanen*, and a menacing-sounding ride called the *Daemonen*, the Demon.

After a satisfying dinner of Danish vegetables and cheeses, the family and their two guests boarded the trolley and headed for the Tivoli Gardens. They arrived around 8:30 in the evening, just as dusk was setting in. They strode through the Victorian entrance to the park and were entranced by the park's onion-domed centerpiece, a turreted, castle-like structure built in the eastern style and adorned with thousands of bright violet, green and gold lights. The effect was almost magical, and Charlie and Jonathan could only stare with delight.

As soon as they entered the park, Werner insisted they go on the bumper cars. Werner grabbed Charlie's hand and the two jumped into a car, while Lorenz and Agatha entered a second car, and Jonathan and Sarah hopped into a third. Werner was behind the wheel of his car and Lorenz and Jonathan steered the other two. Predictably, Werner was relentless, time and again positioning his car to ram the cars occupied by his parents and Jonathan and Sarah. Not surprisingly, Werner figured out that his parents weren't crazy about being hit so he concentrated his attention on the car occupied by Jonathan and Sarah.

Jonathan tried to position his car to go on the offensive, but to no avail. Instinctively, little Werner seemed to get the upper hand and rammed his car remorselessly into the car driven by Jonathan. Each time Jonathan and Sarah were rammed, they laughed and Sarah would feign fear and surprise and grab on to Jonathan. Jonathan was so busy trying to avoid Werner, he hardly noticed that Sarah had buried her head in his shoulder.

When Jonathan did take notice, he thought he might ask Sarah to shift position. He looked toward her, but could see only her golden hair on his shoulder. Her face was obscured. On reflection,

Jonathan decided he didn't want to disturb Sarah's nuzzling. Wordlessly, Jonathan returned to the business of trying to evade the relentless attacks of Werner the Wild.

The hour had grown late and they all headed for the trolley back home. Werner's enthusiasm had not waned and he was full of stories about his exploits during the evening. Sarah was serenely quiet, as if at the intersection of contentment and melancholy.

The following day, Charlie and Jonathan had to take their leave. After a hearty breakfast, they pulled their clothing together and prepared to say goodbye and catch a trolley to the train station. Werner jumped up on his cousin and gave Charlie a big hug. Lorenz and Agatha embraced both boys and wished them well on their journey back to America. Surprisingly, Sarah was not present. Agatha went to Sarah's room to remind her that Charlie and Jonathan were leaving. When Agatha returned, she reported that Sarah was feeling poorly and wished for her mother to say goodbye for her.

Jonathan and Charlie both asked Agatha to give Sarah a hug for them and expressed the hope Sarah would feel better. Sarah heard the door close as Charlie and Jonathan left for the train. She embraced the boat neck sweater that Jonathan had given her and cried forlornly.

Chapter 5
Sophomore Year
August 1937–June 1938

The passage back to America had been uneventful, though both boys were conscious of the large dent they had made in the funds left by Mrs. Zorrofsky. They arrived in New York ahead of schedule for the beginning of soccer practice. The weather was so beautiful, they decided again to take the scenic Black Diamond train to Ithaca rather than the more direct train to Syracuse. As they sped through northeastern Pennsylvania and New York's southern tier, they were alternatingly saddened by the starkness of the small mining towns they passed and exhilarated by the beauty of the rich hills with vast stores of coal and iron ore that gave life to these small communities.

When they arrived at school, they were taken with the lushness of the Cornell campus. Certainly, it had been no different the same time the year before. But that time had been filled with too much wonder and anticipation for the boys to appreciate the grandeur of Cornell's rolling campus and its resplendent greenery. Charlie moved into the fraternity house and Jonathan took residency in the Hans Bethe house. The two looked forward to their second year at Cornell.

Soccer practice commenced. The team had one legitimate All-American candidate in Leonard Darling, and everyone was enthusiastic about the team's prospects. Before the boys knew it, the beany-clad freshmen had arrived, school was about to begin and so was the soccer team's eight-game schedule.

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Jonathan was happy to be living in the dormitory. His room had a nice view of West Hill. However, he made it a point to visit his fraternity brothers after soccer practice in the afternoon and even took a few meals at the fraternity house each week.

There were few secrets in the fraternity house and, when it came to female conquests, there were none, especially when it involved Mimi Sonnenzweig. A sophomore at the university and an SDT sorority sister, Mimi had bedded several of the brothers, and others were waiting their turn. Even Charlie had found himself on intimate terms with Mimi, which is how Jonathan and Mimi had become acquainted. Fortunately for Charlie, his amorous relationship with Mimi was short lived, as it had begun to affect his alertness at soccer practice as well as his studies. For the present, Mimi had set her sights on Philip Steiner, a junior from Louisville.

For Jonathan, the semester was flying by. With soccer practice and three lab sciences to deal with, he felt like a boat running before a stiff wind. Early in November, after midterms were behind him, Jonathan decided to relax for a couple of days and catch up with the brothers at the fraternity house. When he arrived, Charlie and three of the other brothers were in the card room playing bridge. Jonathan sat with them for a couple of hours and chatted in between hands.

Jonathan went to the kitchen for a snack and on the way, he noticed Mimi reading a magazine. Jonathan had been told that Mimi was still with Philip Steiner. The relationship surprised many of the brothers for Philip was very status conscious and not the type to get involved with someone whose favors were so easily handed out. Philip's family owned one of the largest clothing stores in Louisville and was also very prominent within the Louisville Jewish community. Jonathan knew Philip was pre-law and planned to return to his hometown and set up shop using his father's connections.

Mimi was reading the magazine and hadn't noticed Jonathan. Playfully, Jonathan approached Mimi from the rear and put his hands over her eyes. "Guess who?" said Jonathan. "I'll give you a hint. It's not your Confederate friend, Philip."

"Jonathan," replied an amused Mimi. "I haven't seen you for a while."

"Guilty," said Jonathan. "Midterm exams and soccer have been keeping me honest. On the serious side, I hear Philip and you are hitting it off pretty well."

"Yes, we are," said Mimi with satisfaction.

"Better watch yourself. You may find yourself in a relationship."

"Believe it or not, I think I am in a relationship. Philip is talking about bringing me home for Christmas break."

Though wanting to be upbeat, Jonathan's skepticism caused him to hesitate. He thought that no good was likely to come of Mimi's relationship with Philip. He decided against saying anything, despite his misgivings.

After a second or two, Jonathan put on a game smile and willed himself to say laughingly, "Christmas in Louisville. Now, that sounds romantic." Jonathan's thinly-disguised doubts had clearly been communicated to Mimi, because he saw her wince. Nevertheless, she, too, found a way to be buoyant and, in a dismissive gesture, responded, "Oh, stop it, Jonathan." Then she noticed her beaux entering the house. "Here comes Philip now."

"Hi," said Jonathan. Philip returned the greeting, slapped Jonathan on the back in a friendly way and then motioned Mimi to follow.

"Bye-bye," said Mimi, as she winked at Jonathan. "The Confederacy calls." Philip looked perplexed, but did not say anything.

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Jonathan was relieved when Charlie escaped from his soccer lethargy and regained his old form. The team began to show

promise and Leonard Darling was on his way to being named an All-American for the Mid-Atlantic College Region. However, the glue never took hold and the Cornell team ended the season by losing to Haverford by three goals. Overall, the team had amassed a disappointing 3-5 record.

After the Haverford game, Jonathan returned to the dormitory and Charlie went back to the fraternity house. They agreed to meet later that day for dinner at the house. It was the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the cook had prepared a traditional Thanksgiving meal. Jonathan was sore from the game and wanted a little down time to recover. When he arrived at the fraternity house, it was dark outside and close to dinnertime. What he saw startled him.

Three police cruisers were parked in front of the fraternity house and every light in the house was lit. Jonathan considered turning around, but his curiosity got the better of him. He entered the house through the front door and smelled the pleasing aroma of turkey. That turned out to be the last pleasant sensation of the evening. Five police officers were in the parlor, each one questioning a fraternity brother. Also engaged in the questioning was the dean of students. Out of the corner of his eye, Jonathan spotted Charlie and sidled over to him.

"What's going on?"

"It's Mimi."

"What about Mimi?"

"She was bleeding from the vagina and feverish when she arrived at the infirmary. She had lost a lot of blood. The police believe she had an abortion that went bad."

"Oh, no!" said Jonathan, hoping he did not look as guilty as he felt. "Where is Philip?

"Shit! He's being questioned downtown."

"For involvement with the abortion?"

"I don't know," said Charlie, no longer his usual unruffled self. He started to cry.

"What's going on?" asked Jonathan, obviously dismayed at his friend's emotional unraveling.

Charlie managed to regain his composure and looked directly at Jonathan. "I could've been at the center of this whole mess. I don't feel great about my involvement with Mimi. She was willing and you know me; I'm always horny. Luckily, we decided it wasn't good for either of us. But I still feel awful and hell, if things had gone the other way, they could be questioning me downtown."

"I know. We're all culpable. Even me. I could've told her no good would come of her relationship with Philip, but I didn't because I didn't want to stir up trouble. So, who's more responsible: you or me?"

"Thanks for putting it that way, but I still feel awful," replied Charlie. "Anyway, to answer your question, last night while you and I were away having our end-of-season soccer dinner, Mimi apparently came to the house in a very agitated state."

"Why?"

"This is second hand. Mimi was waiting for Philip to return from the library. She was acting very upset and was pacing. A couple of the brothers tried to make her feel comfortable, but to no avail."

"That doesn't sound good."

"When Philip returned to the house, Mimi accosted him even before he'd had a chance to take off his coat. She wanted to know whether Philip was really taking her home for Christmas break and whether he really loved her."

"Can't say I'm surprised."

"Nor I. Philip was embarrassed at being confronted this way in front of all the brothers. Even worse, he knew that his lies to Mimi were about to be exposed."

"Poor Mimi."

"Yes. When Philip failed to reassure Mimi that he was taking her home, Mimi got upset. She pounded on Philip's chest and

screamed. Some of the brothers who felt affection for Mimi tried to calm her. A couple of SDT girls who were in the house also tried to comfort her. Mimi would have no part of it, and got more hysterical. Finally, one of the other girls was able to calm Mimi and offered to leave with her."

"Did Mimi go with the other girl?"

"No. She grabbed her coat and ran toward the front door. As she was leaving, she looked back at Philip who had been speechless during the whole episode. Mimi spat on the floor and then, in an enraged shriek, ran back to Philip and told him he could take his fraternity *and his baby* and shove it. Mimi then ran out the door. After recovering from the shock of what Mimi had said, Philip tried to follow her. But Mimi had already made her escape and was gone. Now the dean of students is saying the house may be put on probation and that any one of us who had relations with Mimi will likely wind up with a black mark on his academic record."

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After the incident with Mimi, Jonathan lost interest in the fraternity. Charlie, too, had been deeply shaken by the experience and was also ill at ease with fraternity life. Even so, Charlie would have remained in the fraternity house if for no other reason than a sense of duty. However, Charlie's stay at the ZBT house was to be short lived—a circumstance that was not of his making.

Charlie was soon brought before the disciplinary committee and his conduct was found wanting. Worse, a disciplinary citation was entered on his permanent record setting forth Mimi's near fatal abortion and her earlier involvement with Charlie. In addition, Charlie was placed on probation for the duration of his time at Cornell.

Fortunately, due to the intervention of Todd Wentworth who praised Charlie's dedication to Cornell soccer, Charlie was spared being thrown off the soccer team. He was told the disciplinary ci-

tation would be expunged from his record upon his graduation, under two conditions. First, Charlie had to sever all contact with the fraternity by the end of the semester and second, he would have to exhibit exemplary behavior for the remainder of his time at Cornell.

The action of the disciplinary committee weighed heavily on Charlie, as the citation would blemish his record should he choose to apply to graduate school before completing his studies at Cornell. However, the requirement that he sever ties with the fraternity offered the opportunity to put the affair with Mimi behind him and perhaps provide some peace of mind. With relief, Charlie acquiesced to the demands of the disciplinary committee and went about the business of salvaging the remainder of the semester.

Charlie was able to break his residency agreement with ZBT and move back to the dormitory with Jonathan. The move provided Charlie with an opportunity to redirect his focus and better attend to his studies. Charlie's grades had suffered while living in the fraternity house and being back in the dormitory provide an opportunity for Jonathan to be a good influence.

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The second semester went by fast. In the proverbial wink of an eye, summer was upon Charlie and Jonathan. Jonathan was looking forward to spending time with Anton and Vanessa. All over campus, the discussion had focused on the *Anschluss*, Hitler's March annexation of Austria. Jonathan knew the subject would be high on the list of dinnertime conversations in London and he was eager to hear his father's perspective.

With effort, Jonathan put European politics to the back of his mind as Charlie and he made yet another Atlantic crossing. They arrived at Vanessa's house on a sunny June afternoon. The house had been brightened up considerably during the intervening year. Vanessa had done an excellent job of monitoring the local newspapers for furniture sales and the university press for word of de-

parting faculty members who might be interested in selling their furnishings. The result was a near miracle, decoratively speaking, and Jonathan and Charlie did not fail to notice.

Jonathan greeted his father warmly, then made an exaggerated bow in Vanessa's direction. "You've done wonders with this place," said Jonathan, as he gestured toward the new furnishings.

"Yes," agreed Charlie, as he admired, among other things, the rich mahogany dining room table that was festively set for dinner.

Vanessa observed Charlie's approving glance in the direction of the dining area and took this as her cue to seat the boys for dinner. "You college boys must be very hungry after so long a journey. Please, sit down. Let's have dinner."

Dinner consisted of a capon, roasted potatoes and broccoli. The boys dug in appreciatively. Anton watched Jonathan eat and tried to take in any changes that had occurred since he had last seen his son. Jonathan had filled out noticeably and, at age 19, was a well-built, confident young man with pleasant dark features that nostalgically made Anton recall Hannah's good looks.

While Vanessa was clearing the dinner dishes in preparation for dessert, Anton predictably turned the conversation toward the *Anschluss*. "Jonathan, I'm sure you've been keeping up with events here in Europe. What do you make of Hitler's annexation of Austria?"

"You're more the expert on that subject than I, but it can't be good. Everyone knows about Hitler's territorial ambitions. But wasn't it surprising that he annexed Austria right under the noses of Britain, France and Russia, in clear violation of the 1919 Versailles provisions?"

"Bold, yes. Surprising, no. Both Britain and France are preoccupied with economic issues and are digging themselves out of the Depression. Even if this weren't the case, the Brits apparently have no stomach for treating the annexation as a *casus belli*, particularly since Austria has become so inconsequential a country.

The Russians, on the other hand...who knows what they're thinking? The socialist revolution has generated more problems than you can count."

"Do you think the annexation of Austria is a threat to the stability of Europe?"

"In and of itself, no," observed Anton. "As part of a trend, yes. Hitler's army has become alarmingly large. His militarization of the Rhineland in 1936 and now the *Anschluss* point toward an increasing German appetite for territory and power. A few weeks before invading Austria, Hitler announced that he could not tolerate the thought of ten million Germans living under what he called foreign oppression. If I read the tea leaves correctly, it will not take long for Hitler to make a move."

"Not a very pretty picture!"

"No. I'm hopeful nothing will happen this summer while Charlie and you are in England. I'll be happy when the two of you return to the United States where an ocean will separate you from the events threatening to unsettle Europe. On that score, Vanessa and I have a surprise."

"Well, don't keep us in suspense. What is it?"

"Do you remember my speaking of Franz Boas at Columbia?"

"Of course. You've idolized him forever and have been corresponding with him for almost as long."

"Right. Well, Franz is getting up in years and has only been doing research as an emeritus in residence. Next year he is going on permanent emeritus status, resulting in a vacancy in the anthropology department. They've invited me to fill that vacancy and I've accepted. That means Vanessa and I will be sailing with you when you return to the States in August."

"That's great news for a lot of reasons. I'm so happy for you."

"Right you are. In addition to joining America's strongest anthropology department and being much closer to you, I will also have the opportunity to spend as much time with Franz as my

position permits. For me, it's like eating dessert three meals a day."

"Speaking of which," called out Vanessa, "it's time for real dessert and I've made a special one for our weary travelers."

Two months later, Jonathan and Charlie boarded ship following another summer of playing football in England. This time, however, they were joined by a jubilant Anton and a mildly anxious, but typically stouthearted, Vanessa.

Chapter 6
Unsettling Events
September 1938–May 1939

The first semester of Jonathan and Charlie's junior year had been going well academically. But in Europe, events were threatening to spiral out of control.

Having annexed Austria with nary a shot being fired, Hitler had set his sights on the German-speaking majority in the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia. The *Führer* had played the war card and threatened to destroy the country unless the Sudetenland was given over to Germany. The Czech government of Edvard Beneš had objected. But, England, France and Italy thought otherwise. Unbeknown to Beneš, England's Neville Chamberlain and his counterparts from France and Italy agreed to meet with Hitler late in September in the Bavarian city of Munich. There, in what many construed as a cowardly act of appeasement, the three had acceded to Hitler's demands. Beneš had no choice but to do the same. On October 1, as columns of Nazi troops arrived to hear the cheers of the Sudetenland's German-speaking inhabitants, the disunion of Czechoslovakia had begun.

Little more than a month later, on a Thursday morning, Jonathan was barely out of bed when a dormitory mate advised that Anton was on the phone. Anton and Jonathan had established a pattern of talking for a few minutes on Sunday evenings, so the call was unexpected. Worriedly, Jonathan ran to the hall pay phone to find out why his father was calling. To his relief, Anton advised that both he and Vanessa were fine. However, he went on to report a call he had just received from Ehrlich Von Stahl, a

trusted colleague from Hamburg, about events he had witnessed the night before on November 9.

Anton tried to be calm, but his voice was filled with alarm as he repeated Ehrlich's words describing a Germany that had gone berserk and engaged in wanton atrocities against its Jews. During a night of frenzied burnings, beatings and murders, crazed Germans had destroyed almost all of the country's synagogues and had killed almost 100 Jews. Anton wanted to talk about what was going on but he was too upset, so the two agreed to talk later in the week.

Jonathan was understandably unnerved by the telephone conversation with his father. After Jonathan dressed, he met with Charlie and told him about the conversation. Jonathan also passed on his father's request that the two boys do their best to publicize the events that Von Stahl had recounted. Charlie agreed to raise the issue in one of his classes and Jonathan resolved to bring it up the next day in his German literature course.

A. B. Faust, the head of the Cornell's German language department, taught Jonathan's German literature course. Jonathan knew Faust had been a recent visitor to Hitler's Germany and had received an honorary degree from the University of Göettingen in Germany at the end of June. However, because Jonathan had been away over the summer, he had not had an opportunity to read about Faust's visit in the local press. Had he done so, he would have learned that, at the ceremony, Faust had expressed his appreciation by giving the salute used by the Nazis to venerate Hitler.

Professor Faust's class was on the third floor of the language building. The course required German language proficiency as a prerequisite. As a result, all of the students were upperclassmen. According to the practice demanded by Faust, Jonathan and the others in his class rose as the professor entered the classroom. Faust gestured for all to be seated and began spreading out his

notes. He then launched into the day's subject matter—the role of liturgical writing in German literary history. Faust had asked the class to survey Martin Luther's writings in the library. For his class presentation, Faust had chosen a specific passage from Luther about which Faust was particularly fond. The passage described Luther's refusal in 1521 to recant his criticism of the Church, even in the intimidating presence of Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

With utmost dignity, Faust articulated Luther's immortal words: "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen."

The class was quiet. All around Jonathan, his fellow students were focusing on the majesty of Luther's words. But, Jonathan was reflecting on another writing of Luther's he had uncovered while looking over Luther's works in the library. This writing, entitled *On the Jews and Their Lies*, was a 65,000-word polemic that equated the Jewish faith to filth and vituperatively said of the Jews: "they are a base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth." Further, the work directed Luther's followers to avoid synagogues, decline to live among Jews or provide them with safe passage, destroy their holy books and prevent their rabbis from teaching. In the library, Jonathan had not believed what he was reading, but there it was.

As he was reflecting on Luther's screed, Jonathan's thoughts drifted to Von Stahl's report of the widespread atrocities that had been recently committed against Germany's Jews and suddenly he sat bolt upright. It dawned on him that what was taking place in Germany might not just be a response to the rants of Adolf Hitler or the sinister plotting of his maniacal propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels. Instead, what Von Stahl had witnessed might merely have been a manifestation of pent-up religious hatred, ar-

ticulated by Martin Luther more than four centuries in the past, and never abandoned since that time.

On impulse, Jonathan raised his hand much to the annoyance of Professor Faust, who was about to resume his lecture. Irritably, the professor acknowledged Jonathan. "What is it, Mr. Sternbloom?"

"Professor Faust, you traveled to Germany recently. You must be aware of the hardships that have been imposed on the country's Jews, not to speak of the widespread murder of German Jews only a few days ago." As he spoke, Jonathan noticed that some students were clearing their throats nervously while others were hiding behind their books. At this, Jonathan became nervous and regretted having spoken.

Jonathan tried to avoid looking at his professor. However, Faust walked up to Jonathan's desk and was glaring down at him. With a *froideur* that emphasized his disdain, Faust hissed, "Mr. Sternbloom, this is a literature class, not a political science course."

"I'm sorry, Sir. I did not mean to be impolite. It's just that I was looking at Luther's writings condemning the Jews and encouraging church followers of the day to live apart from the Jews and destroy their holy books. Now, the German people seem to be acting out Luther's message and I was wondering whether you, as a student of Luther, had ever made that connection."

"Mr. Sternbloom, I have not made any such connection. So, if you please, I will hear no more of this in my class—that is, if you wish to remain in my class." Jonathan held his peace, but not without a rising feeling of contempt for his teacher. Jonathan's political innocence had been shattered.

Jonathan tried to put the incident with Faust behind him. Resolutely, he did his German homework with utmost thoroughness, so that Faust would have no cause to find fault. And, of course, soccer offered a refuge from Jonathan's concerns regarding

Germany. Then, another incident struck that was to have long-term effects in a more personal way than his exchange with Faust.

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Once again, Cornell's soccer team had a disappointing season. However, the last game of the year offered an opportunity for redemption and the team was well prepared and optimistic about a victory. Jonathan and Charlie had been practicing a maneuver they had used with success in the past. Jonathan would pass the ball to Charlie, fake an offensive run to the right, suddenly reverse direction, and then receive a pass to the left from Charlie. The practice sessions had been going well and the boys were eager to use the play during the game.

Their opportunity came in the second half of the game. With the score tied, Jonathan lobbed a pass to Charlie, as they had practiced. Jonathan ran a pattern to Charlie's right. Charlie dribbled the ball to his right, as if to pass it to the streaking Jonathan. On cue, Jonathan reversed direction so that he was running diagonally toward the goal, but now to Charlie's left. Charlie, who had been looking to his right as he dribbled aggressively in that direction, slowed down and turned his head to the left to determine Jonathan's position. The defending midfielder hadn't expected Charlie to slow down. The sound of the impact could be heard all over the field. Charlie went down in a lump, unconscious. When he woke in the hospital, his head and left knee were heavily bandaged. He felt severe pain coming from his knee. He saw Jonathan and the team physician sitting nearby. The doctor spoke first.

"You were hit hard. You suffered a mild concussion and there should be no lasting neurological problems. However, your knee is another story. We didn't want to do anything while you were unconscious but now that you're awake, we'd like your consent to operate. We think we can save the knee so that you'll be able to walk. However, I'm afraid your soccer days are over. Both

ligaments in your left knee have been severely torn. We'll do what we can but I think that, for you, running is a thing of the past."

For a second time, Jonathan watched his friend dissolve into tears. Much as he would have liked, Jonathan could do nothing. Of all the things that had occurred since his mother died—even Mimi's near-fatal abortion—this made him feel the saddest. More importantly, it seemed so pointless. Jonathan found himself deep in thought—the kind of thought that has beset young and old since time immemorial: *What force of nature would inflict such misfortune and why?* Interrupted from his thoughts by the sound of Charlie's sobs, Jonathan could do no more than cradle his friend as he was prepared for surgery.

Charlie's recovery was slow and painful, but recover he did. He was grateful that he could walk and sought refuge in his school work as a way of forgetting that he would never again dribble a soccer ball in the direction of an opponent's goal. As Charlie's recovery progressed, so did the remainder of the school year. Before they knew it, Jonathan and Charlie were looking forward to their senior year.

Now that school was out, Jonathan had hoped to spend time with his father and Vanessa. However, Anton had accepted an invitation from UCLA to deliver a series of lectures over the summer. The offer had also raised the intriguing possibility that Anton might even be able to spend time in Guatemala, studying the ancient Mayan ruins at Uaxactun. So, despite his reservations at being separated from Jonathan, Anton was eager to get underway. Jonathan made a quick trip to Columbia to say goodbye to his father and Vanessa, Then, he was on his own for the summer.

Returning to Europe was no longer an option. The political instability on the continent had taken care of that. So, both boys secured summer jobs in Ithaca, Charlie working for a lawyer and Jonathan working in the Ithaca hospital.

Chapter 7
Anton is Drawn Back to England
Fall 1939–Spring 1940

On August 23, 1939, as Jonathan and Charlie were preparing for their senior year of college, Germany and Russia—mortal enemies in the Great War—unexpectedly signed a non-aggression pact. Germany no longer had to worry about its eastern flank. Little more than a week passed before the German army, on September 1, took advantage of the pact and sliced through Poland from the north and the south. In short order, the Nazis surrounded Warsaw, while leaving the door open for the Red Army to march through Poland's eastern border.

Pursuant to their treaty obligations to Poland, on September 3, both Britain and France declared war on Germany. But by September 29, Poland had been partitioned between Germany and Russia and no longer existed as an independent nation. Danzig, the home of Hannah's relatives, the Herskovitz family, was now in German hands.

Fully 200,000 Poles either lost their lives or were wounded during the invasion, and the country's leading military officers and politicians were slaughtered or sent to camps. Two weeks later, the deportation of Austrian and Czechoslovakian Jews to German-occupied Poland began. Less than a year had passed since Chamberlain had returned from Munich and exultantly announced there would be "peace for our time." It was clear that the effort to make peace with Hitler had been an illusion. There was no doubt now as to the *Führer's* intentions.

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On campus, the talk was of the war in Europe. However, the United States remained neutral after Hitler's invasion and, on the tree-lined quads of Cornell, life went on.

During the first week in October, Jonathan, now a senior, received an invitation to meet with Andrew Dalton, his chemistry professor and pre-med advisor. Jonathan eagerly charged over to the chemistry building on the appointed day and sat in the waiting area connected to the offices of the chemistry department. At length, a smiling Professor Dalton emerged from his office and greeted Jonathan warmly. "It's so good to see you. Please come into my office."

Jonathan complied and the two entered Dalton's small but ornate office. His desk was overflowing with open books, hand-written notes and typed sheets of paper. "Please make yourself comfortable, Jonathan. This will be a pleasant meeting."

"Thank you, Sir. Is there anything you require from me?"

"No. I wanted to tell you that Cornell has already received so much from you, both in classroom performance and play on the field, that the pre-med department has unanimously agreed to give your medical school application the highest endorsement. In fact, it is our wish that you consider attending our new medical school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan."

"I'm tongue tied. I don't know what to say. This is the moment I've been waiting for during my entire college career. Of course, I would love to go to Cornell. I've seen the new medical school building and it's beautiful. What do I do now?"

"All you have to do is fill out the basic application materials and leave the rest to us. It will take a couple of months to complete the process and you may have to go to New York City. But from my point of view, it's in the bag! We have never had an applicant from Cornell denied admission to the university's medical school when the pre-med department unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed an application. In your case it should be a

breeze, as your grades are outstanding. In addition, the report I received from the hospital where you worked this past summer indicates you'll make an exemplary physician. So, there it is. You can apply elsewhere if you like, but I wouldn't waste too much time filling out applications, as your admission to Cornell is all but assured."

Jonathan was overjoyed. *If an inflated balloon had feelings,* he mused, *it would probably feel the way I do right now. It's as if someone just filled my cheeks with air to produce the world's biggest smile.* With difficulty, he checked his enthusiasm and extended his hand to Professor Dalton. "Sir, I won't let you down. You'll always have good cause for placing your confidence in me."

"I'm sure I will. Let's keep in touch as time goes on. I expect that you'll have your answer before Christmas."

Jonathan left Dalton's office and ran back to the dormitory to tell Charlie. After class, Jonathan called his father to tell him the good news. "Father, it looks like I'm going to be a doctor. My pre-med advisor just told me I am a shoo-in for Cornell Medical College."

"Hearty congratulations! Vanessa will be thrilled. Is Cornell where you want to go, Jonathan?"

"Yes, I would love to go to Cornell. The new medical school building is so beautiful and I would have a chance to spend four years in New York City near you."

"Do you think it would be prudent to apply to some other medical schools? Columbia Medical School is also a fine institution, perhaps even more highly regarded than Cornell."

"I suppose. But Professor Dalton said I shouldn't waste my time applying to other schools, as Cornell's Medical School has never rejected an applicant who received a unanimous endorsement of the pre-med committee."

"I still think it would be a good idea to apply elsewhere. Getting into medical school is no trifling matter, even with your grades."

"Okay. I'll fill out the application for Columbia."

With both applications completed, Jonathan addressed himself to more pressing matters. The senior year pre-med program at Cornell was known to be extremely demanding. In addition, Jonathan wanted his last year of soccer to be his best, even without Charlie on the field.

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As with most of his fellow students, Jonathan despaired over what was happening in Europe. It had been several years since he had heard from his mother's family in Danzig, and now the city was under German control. Despite Jonathan's preoccupation with events overseas, he managed to pass the month of November without significant distraction from his studies. But it was not easy. On November 30, newspaper headlines screamed that the Soviets had bombed Helsinki and invaded Finland. Finland was a fair distance from Denmark, but Jonathan worried about Lorenz Kreisler and his family. The thought of Sarah falling into German hands filled Jonathan with dismay.

Still, Jonathan focused on his studies as he awaited the happy news of his admission to medical school. However, as December began to roll by, Jonathan became uneasy. *Hadn't Professor Dalton said he would hear of his acceptance from Cornell by Christmas? Christmas was only a week or so away.*

Finally, the day came when Jonathan was once again summoned to Professor Dalton's office. Jonathan eagerly ran over to the chemistry building but as he entered Dalton's office, it did not take much insight to know something was wrong. Compared to their first meeting in September, Dalton's face was now downcast. "Jonathan, I won't beat around the bush. Your application to Cornell Medical School has been rejected. This has never happened before."

"But, why?" stammered a shaken Jonathan.

"I'm afraid I didn't consider your ethnicity when we first met."

"You mean, the fact that I'm Jewish?"

"Yes. We've never had a Jewish applicant who received such a ringing endorsement from the pre-med committee. I just assumed it was business as usual. But sadly, I was wrong."

"What happened?"

"It may not be fair, but Cornell, like most medical schools, only takes in a certain number of Jews each year. There's no question that you were the most qualified of the Jewish applicants."

"So why was I rejected?"

Dalton looked down at his hands for a moment and then awkwardly replied. "The Jewish applicants who were accepted this year were all sons of alumni of the medical school. In each case, the parent had contributed a large amount to the school. It wasn't a competition. It was an auction."

"What am I to do?"

"Did you apply elsewhere?"

"Only to Columbia. On your advice, I didn't waste time on applications."

"Maybe Columbia will come through. If it doesn't, there still may be time to apply elsewhere. If you do, we'll do everything in our power to support your application. I'm so sorry. Please keep in touch."

But Columbia did not come through. In fact, upon his return to the dormitory, Jonathan read the unfortunate news of his rejection from Columbia in a terse letter from the school. He wanted to bury his head. Instead, he called his father.

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Aching all over, Jonathan heard his father's voice on the phone. "Jonathan, how are you? I'm looking forward to seeing you during Christmas break."

"I can't say I'm all that well."

Jonathan proceeded to tell Anton about his meeting with Dalton and the rejection from Columbia. "I don't know what to do.

I've worked so hard and everyone has been so encouraging. I thought my acceptance to medical school was a foregone conclusion. Now, this!"

"Son, listen to me. You've hit some stormy weather, but let's see if we can right the ship. During my three months at UCLA last the summer, I spent many pleasant Saturday mornings at the local synagogue. You'd be surprised how easy it is to make friends over a little schnapps and herring after services. In particular, some of my fellow congregants are doctors affiliated with the UCLA Medical School. With your record, I think they would be happy to champion your case. Let me make a few telephone calls. In the meantime, please prepare your transcripts and other relevant documents so we can get them to UCLA by special delivery, if necessary."

Two weeks later, while visiting with Anton and Vanessa, Jonathan received a call from the dean of admissions at UCLA Medical School. The dean advised that one slot remained in the upcoming medical school class and that he wanted to interview Jonathan over the phone before the choice was made. The interview went well and, three days later, Jonathan received a call from the dean advising that he had been accepted and that a letter would follow. Jonathan's sense of elation was indescribable. He couldn't wait to get back to campus so that he could tell Charlie.

In the meantime, Anton took the good news as an opportunity to break away from his preoccupation with the cataclysmic events taking place in Europe. Anton had been enjoying his time at Columbia and had loved spending the previous summer in California, especially the opportunity to visit the Mayan ruins at Uaxactun with several other UCLA professors. Vanessa, too, had adjusted well to America and was flourishing in Morningside Heights. However, now that England was at war, both he and Vanessa were feeling an emptiness at not being back in London to help with the war effort. They both knew the seas were rife with

German U-boats, making the likelihood of a return passage to England slim. But the knowledge of the dangers posed by the German attack submarines did little to allay the hollowness they felt.

Anton was now regularly corresponding with Alex Braxton of England's Secret Intelligence Service, or SIS. Anton had met Braxton several years before through a colleague at University College. The colleague had innocently mentioned Anton's forthcoming marriage to Vanessa and their planned honeymoon in Egypt. As luck would have it, Braxton, who was second in command at SIS, had been tracking a German general who had booked passage on a Nile riverboat to celebrate his 25th wedding anniversary with his wife. Braxton had persuaded Anton to book the same cruise for his honeymoon so as to spy on the general and learn what he could about Nazi war intentions. Gamely, Vanessa had agreed and the amateur undercover agents had brought back a wealth of intelligence.

Even after Anton had assumed his current position at Columbia, Braxton had made a point of remaining in touch via diplomatic pouch. In recent months, as one after another of the countries of Europe staggered under the Nazi yoke, Braxton's communiqués had become more regular and the tone had become more urgent. Nothing had been said about a possible role for Anton in the war effort. However, there was enough graphic detail in Braxton's letters to ensure that the bloodshed in Europe was constantly on Anton's mind. So, the call from California had not only brought good news, but had also been a welcome diversion. At least for the moment, his son's acceptance to medical school was the most important thing in the world. That night, Vanessa and he dressed in their finest and spent the evening dancing at the Waldorf Astoria.

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On Jonathan's return to campus, he immediately made for Charlie's dormitory room and gushingly told Charlie about his

admission to UCLA. Charlie was excited for Jonathan, but also concerned about his own applications.

The Jewish lawyer who employed him the preceding summer had warned that many of the elite Eastern law schools also limited the number of Jewish students. Charlie didn't want to stay in Ithaca for another three years. With equal adamancy, he did not want to submit to his employer's admonishments, so impetuously he applied to Harvard, Columbia and Yale.

Except for the devastating semester he had spent at the fraternity house, Charlie's grades were good enough for acceptance to a fine school. But he had applied with trepidation because of the Mimi-related disciplinary action that remained in his file. Now it was January and he had received no word. Based on Jonathan's experience, it began to dawn on him: The disciplinary action on his record might be holding him back. However, any one of the schools to which he had applied could use the episode as an excuse for not admitting Charlie when the real reason was a desire to limit the number of Jews in the incoming class.

Nervously, Charlie approached Jonathan one evening. "Does UCLA have a law school?"

"Yes, it does. I've been reading up on the university and, although it is new, it has just about everything. Once a student establishes California residency, he can go to school for very little tuition. Why do you ask? Are you thinking about applying?"

"Yes. I may have made a mistake in limiting myself to the very types of schools that already rejected you for no reason other than your being Jewish."

"I don't know that to be the case at Columbia, but it is a reasonable suspicion. It would be terrific if we both went to school in Los Angeles. Why don't you apply?"

Charlie did apply and was rewarded not many weeks later with a written acceptance. There could not have been a better moment for Charlie than the day the UCLA letter arrived for, by that time,

the admissions offices at Harvard, Columbia and Yale law schools had already sent their regrets. The two boys were now feeling ebullient, knowing they would be heading to Los Angeles the next fall together for a new phase of their American adventure.

With California beckoning, the two future professionals went about the business of completing their senior year in college. Finally, their days at Cornell were about to come to a close. They took their last set of final exams and contentedly waited for graduation.

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The countryside around Ithaca could not have been more beautiful as commencement day arrived. All around, nature had spread her splendor. The towering oaks and hickories of the Arts Quad were awash in greenery. English elms provided their customary shade and exotics, such as the Japanese maples behind Warren Hall and in the Dean's Garden, puffed out their branches in resplendent hues of red and green. It was a lovely time of year for a celebration, and there could be no better place than Cornell in which to do it.

The atmosphere was appropriately festive as friends and family arrived on the morning of Monday, June 17, to cheer on the beaming graduates. For that day, the assembled guests could forget about the country's economic woes and the Nazi advances that were threatening the entire European continent.

All over the stately campus, relatives and guests of the graduates congratulated one another, sipped lemonade and took in the campus' lush flora. As the hour of 11:00 AM approached, the expectant celebrants made their way to Drill Hall and began to seat themselves. Among them were Anton and Vanessa, who were giddy with elation at the prospect of seeing both Jonathan and Charlie receive their degrees. They wished Giles and Saundra were with them, but hoped to be worthy stand-ins.

The commencement ceremony began precisely at 11:00, as the guests rose to applaud the graduates who were now entering the

hall. Of the 1,307 freshmen who had begun their studies at the university four years earlier, those 850 who had successfully completed their studies marched happily from the east entrance of the hall toward the stage. As Jonathan and Charlie passed by, Anton and Vanessa whooped and hollered. They had much to cheer about. Jonathan was graduating *summa cum laude* and, despite Charlie's devastating semester at the fraternity, he was graduating *magna cum laude*. Though feigning embarrassment, the boys were delighted with the antics of their reception committee.

Soon the students arranged themselves in front of the stage and, amidst feelings of nostalgia and relief, watched as the faculty and deans—resplendent in full academic costume—marched onto the stage. After everyone was seated, the Reverend Hugh A. Moran of the Presbyterian Church of Ithaca delivered the benediction. It was then time for the university's president, E. E. Day, to give the commencement address.

Day's speech soared with hope and challenge, as he impressed upon the graduating seniors the need to take their rightful places in a world filled with great promise but with even greater uncertainty. The uncertainty of which he spoke was lost on no one. For most in the hall, Day's lengthy address was a time for introspection and reflection. For the boys, their excitement was muted with concern for the safety and wellbeing of Charlie's parents, his cousins in Denmark, and Jonathan's relatives in Danzig. But Jonathan and Charlie were now Americans and for them, the call of California was upmost on their minds.

Vanessa and Anton sat holding hands, awash in pride. But Anton could not detach himself from another issue that was now commanding his thoughts. Two days earlier, a uniformed officer from the British consulate had delivered a sealed message from Alex Braxton. In the message, Braxton had noted Anton's credentials as a native German speaker, an accomplished anthropologist well attuned to German culture, a learned academic with experi-

ence in America, a student of Africa with a working knowledge of Arabic and a veteran of a successful spy mission. He then went on to describe a new facility in a place called Bletchley Park where British code breakers, operating under the designation Ultra, were unraveling the entire system of German communication ciphers known as Enigma. Braxton had concluded by saying that Anton's credentials cried out for him becoming part of the Ultra effort. Braxton had arranged for Anton to have a senior position at Bletchley and for Anton and Vanessa to be flown to England by military transport. All that remained was Anton's consent.

Suddenly, Anton heard Jonathan's name being called. As Jonathan received his diploma, Anton let out a tremendous yelp for his son. The guttural sound coming from Anton's throat seemed to release him from his worries and brought him back into the spirit of the commencement exercises.

The celebration continued long into the evening and could not have been more uplifting. Anton discovered he was truly a blessed man, as professor after professor sang Jonathan and Charlie's praises. He also knew the time for celebration would soon come to an end, as Vanessa and he had to prepare for their trip back to England.

Chapter 8
California and Leslie
September–October 1941

California suited Jonathan and Charlie just fine. Both were doing well in their second year of school and both loved the southern California warmth and the proximity to the beach. Jonathan's first-year grades had qualified him for a prestigious internship the previous summer, and he was feeling confident about his second-year studies. The only disappointment had been Anton and Vanessa's sudden decision the year before to return to England. When Anton had called to report the news, he sounded conflicted and vague. All he said was that Alex Braxton at MI6, the celebrated British spy agency formerly known as the Secret Intelligence Service, had made the request by special diplomatic courier, that it involved the British war effort, and that Anton's position at Columbia would be waiting for him upon his return.

After the call, Jonathan went through a brief period of loneliness. He knew of his father's and Braxton's history, especially the sleuthing episode on the Nile. So it was not surprising that Braxton would again look to Anton's language skills and knowledge of German society, this time as part of the war effort. Jonathan felt a sense of pride, but it did little to assuage his feeling of emptiness. Jonathan felt his loss even more deeply because of the difficulty of getting mail in and out of England.

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The first year at UCLA had gone by quickly and pleasantly for both boys. At first, Charlie had more free time than Jonathan and put it to good use carousing. However, the demands of law school soon took their toll on Charlie's extracurricular activities. By his

second semester, Charlie settled down and focused his social life on Dianne Findleweiss, a sexually eager young Jewish woman who worked as a secretary in the law firm of Sidney Findleweiss, Esquire, her father. The fortuitous arrangement provided Charlie with a serious outlet for his libidinous needs and won him a summer job.

One of Charlie's classmates, Lester Abelstein, tried to interest Charlie in his sister Leslie, but Charlie was having too much fun with Dianne. Charlie suggested that Lester introduce his sister to Jonathan. Jonathan, who had little time for socializing, was grateful for the introduction.

As it turned out, the arrangement worked out well for Jonathan and likely would have been unsatisfying for Charlie. Leslie, cute by any measure, was a UCLA undergraduate and an aspiring high school English teacher. Her ready smile lit up a welcoming round face. She was serious in school and devoted to her family. She was also committed to proper social behavior; that is to say, she was saving herself for her life partner.

Jonathan might have been discouraged by Leslie's prim attitude toward sex were it not for the fact that she was fun and unfailingly bubbly. It also didn't hurt that she unabashedly worshipped him because he was studying to be a doctor. So Jonathan allowed himself to be drawn into a relationship with Leslie and, over time, developed a fondness for her.

Leslie lived at home with her parents, Seymour and Fannie Abelstein. Seymour was a dentist. Success had not come immediately to Seymour, but when it did, it arrived in waves.

In a sense, Seymour's history in Los Angeles tracked the experience of the early Hollywood Jewish entrepreneurs. As with many of them, Seymour had arrived in southern California around the time of the Great War. The son of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants, Seymour spoke Yiddish as fluently as he spoke English. He was not a big man, but he had a big voice and a first-generation New

York accent to match. Seymour had hoped to be a doctor but, like Jonathan, had experienced the difficulty of a Jewish student getting into medical school. Unlike Jonathan, Seymour had not been admitted to any school. He also had little luck with dental school, until he stumbled on to the Oregon College of Dentistry in Portland. Apparently, few enough Jews applied there to make his application an issue. From there, it had been an easy decision to relocate to Los Angeles.

Los Angeles in the 1910s and 1920s had been a sleepy place with a climate that offered the opportunity for year-round movie making. In addition, it was far away from the East Coast where Thomas Edison's Motion Picture Patents Company was in a position to enforce the many patents Edison had obtained for the production of movies. The handful of men who recognized this twofold advantage of making movies on the West Coast happened to be first-generation Jews from the East Coast. Among them were Wilhelm Fuchs, founder of Twentieth Century Fox; the four Warner brothers—Albert, Harry, Jack and Sam; Harry Cohn, founder of Columbia Pictures; and Samuel Goldwyn and Louis B. Mayer, founders of MGM.

These men were eager to succeed and wanted to become assimilated Americans in every sense, a desire that often led to changing their names and divorcing their Jewish wives in favor of younger gentile women. However, when it came to their health, a Jewish pedigree was key to any medical advice they sought. One day, one of the Warner brothers had a terrible toothache. His assistant tried to reach his favorite dentist but discovered he was out of town on vacation. Knowing his boss's proclivities, the assistant opened the telephone book to search for Jewish dentists who might be of service. Seymour Abelstein, D.D.S., was the first name he came to. Seymour was delighted to be of service. The treatment went well and Seymour had his foot in the door of the movie industry. A few years and a few referrals later, Seymour

could count many of Hollywood's brightest stars among his patients.

Seymour had parlayed his success into a large home for his family in the Jewish neighborhood of Boyle Heights, a Packard convertible for himself, and a UCLA education and a Chevrolet for each of his children. The Abelstein house, which featured a large veranda, also served as Seymour's dental office. In front of the house, there was a large patient parking area where Leslie parked her sporty Chevrolet. On weekend afternoons when Jonathan could steal himself away from his studies, Leslie would take the two of them for a drive. They would go inland toward the central valley of California or west for the short drive to the coast.

Jonathan loved the beach and the majestic Pacific coastline. He could spend hours just watching the wild oceanic surf as it piled on the California shore, but Leslie had no patience for such things. Jonathan also loved the farmlands and the nearby mountains, but became depressed upon seeing the poverty and deplorable living conditions of the farm workers. He often voiced his discomfort to Leslie, but she either didn't see what he was seeing or didn't mind.

Often, Leslie and Jonathan double dated with Charlie and Dianne. In the summer, they went to the beach at Santa Monica to romp in the water. The two young women would playfully splash their respective boyfriends until they raised their hands in mock surrender. When they got out of the water, Charlie and Dianne were invariably all over one another, their hands searching eagerly to the extent permitted by daylight and the prying eyes of nearby beachgoers.

Jonathan and Leslie also showed affection toward one another during those carefree, sunny beach days, but in a different way. When they got out of the water, they lay down on the blanket, Jonathan on his back and Leslie on her elbows. Leslie loved to

admire Jonathan's well-defined body and would lean over and kiss him tenderly. First, she kissed his brow, then his cheeks, neck, ears and, finally, his lips. Her kisses were full and passionate, and her wet body dripped on Jonathan's aroused body. But aside from an inadvertent touch that would drive Jonathan crazy, Leslie never allowed direct contact between their bathing suit clad bodies.

Jonathan often thought about his relationship with Leslie, but each time dismissed any reservations he had. He was busy with his studies, and she was perky and devoted, and, for all her sexual restraint, a great kisser. One Saturday afternoon when they were visiting a nearby winery, Leslie suggested, over a glass of cabernet, that they think about getting engaged. Jonathan said he would be happy when that time arrived.

From that point, Jonathan was a regular visitor at the Abelstein household. Seymour had never gotten over his real dream of becoming a doctor, so the fact that Jonathan was in medical school gave him extra stature in Seymour's mind. Leslie's mother, Fannie, was also taken with the idea that her daughter might marry a doctor, especially one as handsome and considerate as Jonathan.

Fannie was an excellent cook and saved her best for. Once again, Jonathan found himself regularly sitting around the *Shabbos* dinner table. Jonathan might have been consumed by fond memories on those occasions, but Seymour's presence at the table allowed little else to intrude. Even nostalgia was a casualty.

Seymour was not particularly religious, but had dutifully sat at the Friday night *Shabbos* table since marrying his more religious wife 25 years earlier. Only Fannie's stern insistence over the years had enabled the few *Shabbos* rituals observed by the family to survive. The Friday night dinner table, with its captive audience, was the perfect forum for the talkative, assertive Seymour.

In particular, Seymour spoke repeatedly about the Roosevelt Administration and whether it would enter the war. Seymour believed Roosevelt had already shown his hand with his Cash and Carry and Lend Lease programs aimed at arming the British. He knew there were several isolationists in Congress and that they had, so far, been successful in keeping America out of the war. But he also knew that the American public was staunchly opposed to a Nazi-dominated Europe and that numerous polls evidenced the readiness of the people to take up arms against the Nazis.

"You know," Seymour said on one occasion after Jonathan had become a regular presence at the family's *Shabbos* table, "it's a good thing you're in medical school. They'll probably let you complete your studies when the war comes."

Turning to Lester, Seymour grimaced as he observed resignedly, "My boy here will probably not be as lucky. Law school is not likely going to offer him an opportunity for deferral."

"What makes you so certain about our entering the war?" asked Jonathan.

"Roosevelt is an Anglophile. He knows England can't hold on alone. In addition, Roosevelt knows that a German-dominated Europe will be a threat to the rest of the world and that Hitler's ambitions are without limit. Look at what's going on in Russia. Hitler didn't have to invade Russia. He'd already had a non-aggression pact with Stalin. Taking into account occupied Poland and Czechoslovakia, he also had plenty of opportunity to satisfy his *lebensraum* craziness and find ample room for growth. Admittedly, Hitler doesn't like the idea of the Russian bear at his doorstep. But going after a prize so big that even he might not be able to swallow it is a strong indication of his lust for expansion and dominion."

"But, the war has been going on for some time now. Hitler has marched all over Europe and we still haven't committed."

"True, but mark my words. One of these days a German U-boat is going to go after one of our convoys in the Atlantic. It

may be intentional or inadvertent. A cargo ship or a military escort may go down to the bottom of the sea. The German government will apologize profusely. But the event will accelerate war fever in the country and, before you know it, we will be at war."

After dinner, Jonathan and Leslie drove up to Beverly Hills to watch the city lights below. Leslie had already shown Jonathan the mansions of the stars that occupied the hillside and he could picture them vividly as they made their way up Mulholland Drive past the iconic Hollywood sign. Leslie parked the car and the two of them took in a breathtaking view of Los Angeles illuminated by a full moon.

Leslie expected a kiss. Instead, Jonathan leaned toward her and asked what she thought about her father's ideas on the United States entering the war.

Leslie looked at Jonathan, stroked his cheek and replied airily, "Silly boy. I don't concern myself with such things. I leave Lester to deal with my father's political views."

Jonathan was taking in Leslie's response. It bothered him. His mother and father had always talked about politics and Jonathan had always assumed he would wind up with a woman who was as comfortable discussing politics as was his mother. Jonathan must have cringed involuntarily as he was evaluating his thoughts, because Leslie saw it.

"Don't be that way!" she said to Jonathan, who was embarrassed over having broadcast what he was thinking. "We have a good time together even without discussing politics." She kissed her future husband tenderly, bringing Jonathan back to the moment and the stunning view in front of them. He gently returned Leslie's kiss.

Leslie looked affectionately at her beaux. "Jonathan, one day there's going to be a lot more of what you like and you are going to enjoy every minute of it. For now, why don't we forget politics?"

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As with many of his fellow Jewish American countrymen, Seymour worried incessantly about the plight of Europe's Jews. One *Shabbos* at the dinner table, Seymour railed against America's restrictive immigration policy that had left so many Jews trapped in Europe. Jonathan listened attentively.

Looking at Jonathan, Seymour asked unexpectedly, "Jonathan, do you know about the St. Louis affair?"

Jonathan was about to acknowledge that he knew of the St. Louis and its hapless cargo of refugees when he heard Lester mutter, "Not this again!" Jonathan thought it best to let Seymour expound, knowing Seymour would have his say in any event.

"Yes, I have heard about it."

"Then you know how shameful an affair it was. For years during the 1930s, it was nearly impossible for Jews from Germany to fill the meager immigration quotas available to them because of the hurdles created by Congress in the 1924 Immigration Act."

"Charlie and I consider ourselves lucky to be here and even luckier that we were able to become citizens just a few months ago."

"Agreed. You're fortunate you didn't have to enter the country from Germany. Only in 1939, after years of incontrovertible proof regarding the mistreatment of Jews in Germany, did the immigration authorities finally admit German Jews into the country. Even at that, the 23,000 German Jews who were admitted was a small fraction of those clamoring for refuge."

Shaking his head in a show of scorn and dismay, Seymour resumed where he had left off. "Against this backdrop, the steamship *St. Louis*, with 937 Jewish refugees aboard, sailed from Hamburg to Havana. Supposedly, the Hamburg-Amerika Line, the owners of the St. Louis, knew beforehand that, as a result of violent anti-Jewish demonstrations, the Cuban authorities had tightened their immigration rules. But the cruise line nevertheless set sail with its cargo of immigrants, most of whom were on a

waiting list to receive US visas and only planned to stay in Cuba on a temporary basis."

"Why was there such opposition in Cuba?"

"For years prior to the St. Louis affair, Jewish immigrants had been the most desperate to leave Europe. Like many of the passengers on the St. Louis, Jews had sought out Cuba as a temporary place of refuge until they could gain entry to the United States. Their presence provoked resentment possibly because they were Jews or maybe for some other reason. For local Cuban workers who were looking to blame someone for the loss of jobs during the Depression, the visibility of the Jews made them a convenient immigrant group to single out. Not surprisingly, the Cubans refused docking privileges to the St. Louis. The ship's captain then changed course and headed for Miami amidst a hail of requests to allow the ship's occupants to obtain asylum in the United States. The press was sympathetic to the plight of the St. Louis' passengers, but Roosevelt refused to issue an executive order that would have allowed the ship to dock and Congress refused to enact special legislation that would have required it."

Lester had been sitting by with as much patience as he could muster. However, he now felt compelled to chime in. "Dad, we've discussed this time and again. Every time you recount the St. Louis episode, I've tried to remind you that politically, Roosevelt's hands were tied. He must have known even then that he would have to enter the war and did not want to give his enemies in Congress a pretext for opposing him. Had Roosevelt permitted the St. Louis to unload its passengers in American waters, those critics would have claimed the war in Europe was all about the Jews and that Roosevelt was planning on spilling American blood to save a bunch of European Semites."

Seymour was about to cut Lester off when Lester held up his hand. He allowed as to how he did not want to be disrespectful, but also wished to finish his thought. Not wanting to appear in-

flexible in Jonathan's presence, Seymour decided to give in but not before he chided his son. "So, the law school boy wants the last word. Go ahead, Mr. *groyser tzuleyger advokat*, Mr. big shot lawyer."

Unperturbed, Lester took off his *yarmulke*, his head covering, and flourished it in mock salute. After putting it back on, Lester addressed his father. "Dad, you would be the first one to acknowledge how many Jews Roosevelt has taken into the government and how many have been accorded high positions. Look at Henry Morgenthau, the treasury secretary. And wasn't it Hitler himself who, earlier this year, referred to the president as 'Rosenfeld' and claimed that he had proof the president was Jewish? And didn't Roosevelt convene the conference at Evian-les-Bains in the hope of finding a place to which Jews could emigrate?"

"Good try, Lester. But at Evian, Roosevelt wasn't agitating for increased Jewish immigration to the United States. He was hoping to find a home for the Jews somewhere in remote Africa or South America. Roosevelt just didn't want too many Jews in the United States. After all, he is the president who sat on top of Jewish immigration during most of the last decade when only 10% of the Jewish quota from Germany was being met. And look at Breckenridge Long, the guy Roosevelt's got in charge of immigration today. If Long had his way, no Jew would ever enter the country."

"Okay," responded Lester, acknowledging in his tone the hopelessness of arguing with his father over matters having to do with United States immigration policy toward Jews.

Seymour looked at his son contemptuously. "*Du kannst nicht auf meinem rucken pishen unt mir sagen class es regen ist*", he replied in Yiddush, "You can't pee on my back and tell me that it's rain." Then he walked out of the room.

Chapter 9
An Exchange of Letters and Sad Tidings
October 1941

The following Friday, it was all Jonathan could do to arrive at the Abelstein household on time for Shabbos dinner. The week had been busy and he was feeling pressed in several directions. As he prepared to finally leave his apartment, he heard a knock on the door. He opened the door to find a tall, well-dressed man who reached into a pouch and handed Jonathan a letter. "What's this?" asked Jonathan.

"Sir, my name is Roger Davies. I'm a commercial attaché with the British Consulate here in southern California. I have been instructed to deliver this letter from Anton Sternbloom to you by hand. I have also been instructed to advise you that you are welcome to reply to the letter in writing and that I will return in 48 hours to receive your reply."

Stunned, Jonathan could only think to himself, *At long last, a letter from my father*. Jonathan looked up at the man and responded, "Of course I want to reply. Are you really going to return on Sunday? What time?"

"I will be by at this very time on Sunday. And, oh yes! You should be aware that Professor Sternbloom is fine and that the directions for the delivery of this letter came from Whitehall."

Whitehall, thought Jonathan. *I wonder if this has anything to do with Braxton. But, I'm late. I'll open the letter at the Abelstein's house. They'll be excited to hear that I received a letter from my father*

through official channels. Jonathan thanked Davies, finished dressing and then headed over to Leslie's house.

Leslie greeted Jonathan as he entered the house. He made a show of hiding the letter behind his back as Leslie gave him a welcoming kiss. When Leslie asked him what he was hiding, he horsed around until she was no longer willing to treat his antics as a game. When Jonathan thought Leslie was going to burst with impatience, he produced the letter. Leslie squealed with pleasure as they sat down to read it together.

My dearest Jonathan:

I know that our letters have crossed and that you are probably as concerned about me as I am curious about how you are doing in California. I have been assured that this letter will find its way to you. I am very sorry that I must report sad tidings.

As you undoubtedly are aware, the Battle of Britain, as Churchill has called it, and the relentless Blitz that succeeded it, are now over. Bombs no longer fall out of the sky on unsuspecting citizens below. However, the Nazi bombing campaign has left its mark wherever one looks. Carcasses of what had been stately buildings and piles of debris may be seen everywhere.

Four days ago, Vanessa was knocked from her bicycle by a lorry driven by a careless driver. She was vaulted into a debris pile that hid live ordinance and died instantly from the explosion that followed. Her funeral was yesterday. Today, forlorn though I am, I'm back doing intelligence work at an important facility called Bletchley Park, a place I haven't been able to mention until now.

I know that Vanessa was not your mother, biologically speaking, although she loved and admired you as if she had been your

mother. But she was, in every respect, the major figure in my life and, along with you, the essence of any path that lay ahead of me. Now that she is gone, the emptiness is overwhelming and any future that I can imagine seems dark and empty.

I loved your infant sister, Gisela. When she died, I was gripped with grief. Fortunately, I was able to escape by going on field trips, leaving Hannah with the empty bed that Gisela had occupied during her short life. Your mother bore the pain with grace and determination.

Hannah was a much braver and compassionate person than I ever was and I told her so. She was the real force behind our little household and she commanded all my affection and admiration, much of what she did it I took for granted. When I finally came to terms with her death, my grief was overwhelming. After all, she had given birth to you, stood by my side as my career advanced and hers waned, cried with me when we lost your sister, and tolerated my being away from home during countless field trips. I will never forget her classic beauty, her devotion to both you and me, her strength of character and her attentiveness as a mother. When I finally came to terms with her death, I damned the heavens and threw myself into my work.

I could never have known at that time that Vanessa would redeem me from the depths into which I had fallen. But, redeem me she did. Gradually, I felt life returning to my body. Each time I stole a glance at Vanessa over the Shabbos table, a new part of me was awakened until, one day, I realized I had been restored to the world of the living.

Once I allowed this new realization to take over, I became aware of the fine woman

she was. She did not have Hannah's beauty, but Vanessa was always attractive in my eyes and she was no less dedicated than Hannah had been. The fact that Vanessa followed me to Egypt, New York, California, Guatemala and back to England in less than five years is a testament to her durability, love and devotion.

But more importantly, I came to appreciate her as I appreciate my arms, my legs, my heart and my mind. She seemed to know everything that I required, and functioned as if she were just another of my vital organs. Even when I spent long weeks at Bletchley away from her, I knew that Vanessa was always thinking about me, and that comforted me.

Now that she is gone, I am left only with questions—that, and the gnawing feeling that there were things I could have done to make her life better but never got around to doing. Why she was taken away, I cannot say. You have taught me that there is a God, although I know that our two approaches to Judaism differ sharply. I am sincerely grateful to God for having given me Vanessa for the time she was with me on Earth and I cannot presume to understand why God chose to take her away. But I do know that any God who could create a person as fine as she is a god worth knowing. Though I am choked with sadness, I will strive to seek out that god for the rest of my days.

My son, I am so eager to hear about medical school and your life in Los Angeles. I'm told this letter will be delivered to you through the British Consulate in Los Angeles and that you, in turn, may write back to me through the consulate. I'm so sorry to be the bearer of such sad news, but I so look forward to hearing good news from you.

Your loving father, Anton.

Fannie and Seymour had been in the kitchen when Leslie greeted Jonathan at the door. Believing that the two young people wanted a little privacy, neither parent had made any effort to come to the foyer to welcome Jonathan. However, when they heard Jonathan's cry of anguish, they rushed to the front of the house where they found Leslie cradling Jonathan as he held his head in despair. "What happened?" yelled Fannie, as she sat down next to the grieving Jonathan and put her arm around his shoulder.

"It's Jonathan's stepmother," cried Leslie, as she wiped her eyes. "She was on her bicycle and got pushed off the road by a truck. She hit a pile of rocks that concealed an unexploded bomb. She died instantly from the explosion."

"I'm so sorry," said Fannie as she patted Jonathan's slumped head and kissed him gently.

Even the usually bumptious Seymour was almost at a loss for words. After a few seconds of silence, he said, "do you want to talk about it?"

Jonathan looked up at the concerned members of the Abelstein family and wiped away tears that were interfering with his vision. "Vanessa was like a mother to me. I didn't think I could ever accept anyone other than my real mother. But Vanessa brightened my world and made everything feel better. I miss her terribly and I feel awful. If you don't mind, I would like to go home and write a return letter to my father. The messenger who delivered this letter said he would return for my reply."

"I'll drive you," said Leslie, and the two of them left. When they arrived at Jonathan's apartment, Jonathan and Leslie kissed. Leslie did not want to leave, but Jonathan encouraged her to go so he could attend to the sad, but important, business of writing to his father.

In the apartment, Jonathan pondered what he was going to say. Lacking the heart to say anything, he resignedly crawled into bed. The next morning, he awoke early and found himself with more

resolve to write. Charlie was away for the weekend. The apartment was quiet and Jonathan could take as long as he wanted—undisturbed—to say what he wanted to say. He began writing:

My dear father:

Words cannot express the deep regret and sense of loss I feel over Vanessa's passing. When it was clear my mother was not going to join us from Germany, I took refuge in school and my friendship with Charlie. These measures were merely salves, not cures. Then I began to let Vanessa into my life and she, in turn, allowed me to enter her life.

During those many days when you were no doubt heartsick over the loss of mother and took escape in your office, Vanessa and I found meaning in one another. She surely helped to reinforce my reservoir of confidence after it had been so badly damaged. I would not have been able to succeed during that time were it not for Vanessa's reassurance and attentiveness. That is why I was so happy, despite the memory of mother being fresh in my mind, when Vanessa and you started to discover one another.

Now Vanessa is gone and your sense of emptiness must be overwhelming. I know I have been shaken to the core. What a companion to you she must have been—taking on the role of spy on her honeymoon, picking up stakes and moving to America, hopscotching across the country during the summer, and following you back to England. My guess is she never complained and grew closer to you with every experience. I wish I could say more, but I can't. I hope her resting place in eternity has room for you and for me.

Father, this letter is about Vanessa. But, I want to take a moment to say a few

things to you. I will not become an academic as you have been. I will not have to spend weeks and months away from my family in the field as you needed to do when I was growing up. However, I want you to know that every time one of your friends addressed you as Herr Dr. Professor, it pressed on a pump inside me and puffed up my chest to the point where I thought it would burst. And when you came home and told me stories about your adventures, I could not have been happier.

Even those students at school who didn't like me because I was Jewish were enthralled every time I told them about your exploits. The exotic people, their customs, the animals … all these things provided me with a rich kaleidoscope of stories that none of my classmates could rival. I grew up feeling confident and important, in large part because of the way I internalized your adventures and made them my own.

As an adult, I am no less proud. The resolve you showed in leaving Germany, your work at UCL while trying to overcome mother's passing, your insightfulness in accepting Vanessa as your wife and the sacrifices you have made for your adopted country have all filled me with admiration and awe. I do not know the nature of the work you are doing. However, I know that a proud and resolute England must be singing your praises.

I am guessing that none of my letters have gotten through, so here is some news. I am keeping company with a very nice girl named Leslie Abelstein. She is studying to be a teacher, as was true of mother, and she lives in a lovely house with her family in the Jewish section of Los Angeles. Her father is a dentist and her brother is a classmate of Charlie's at UCLA's law school. That is how we met. I don't know if I will

marry her, but I have given it some thought and we have talked about getting engaged. She doesn't have mother's presence and I don't think she has Vanessa's adaptability, but I am sure Leslie loves me and she is awfully cute and sweet. Now that I know how to reach you, I will keep you posted.

Events in America are all coalescing around the war in Europe. There are many isolationists in and out of government, as I am sure you are aware. However, it's clear to Leslie's father, Seymour, and to me, that Roosevelt has concluded that war is inevitable. I think he is just waiting for the right moment and doing his best to prepare until that moment arrives. For example, just a few miles down the road in Long Beach, the sleepy shipyard there is undergoing a huge transformation. It's in the papers all the time. When they're done, the Long Beach shipyard will be able to repair and overhaul large warships and will also serve as a huge fuel depot for battle-ready ships heading out to sea.

School is going fine for both Charlie and me, but I have this sense of anxiety because I don't know what will happen if America enters the war. Hitler is clearly a monster and must be snuffed out. How and when America engages in that enterprise remains to be seen.

I miss you much at this moment and wish I were with you.

Your loving son, Jonathan.

Chapter 10
The Nation is Rocked and Jonathan Responds
October 1941–March 1942

Several weeks had gone by since the news of Vanessa's passing, and Jonathan had returned to an uneasy normalcy. That normalcy was shaken to the core on the morning of December 7, 1941.

On that day, the skies over Pearl Harbor, headquarters for the United States Pacific Fleet, were clear with only a few broken clouds. The day promised to be a pleasant one for the crews of the numerous United States warships that were berthed in the harbor. Many seamen were preparing to attend church or were just enjoying a leisurely Sunday. Suddenly, waves of Japanese aircraft descended from the sky, opened their bomb doors and dropped payload after payload of ordinance. When the carnage was assessed, two of the Pacific fleet's eight battle ships had been destroyed and six had been badly damaged, three cruisers and four destroyers had been shattered, and over 300 airplanes had been obliterated or crippled. Worst of all, 2,403 military personnel and civilians had been killed. The fleet's flagship aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, might have been among the casualties had rough seas not prevented it from arriving at Pearl before the morning of the December 7. So luckily, the Enterprise and the fleet's other carriers were still at sea at the time of the Japanese attack.

The attack had aimed to neutralize the United States Pacific fleet and thereby drive out all Western influence from those waters. Instead, the attack galvanized a previously isolationist

America in a way the Japanese could never have imagined. The next day, newspaper headlines dripping with bellicosity screamed their outrage. A shaken but determined President Franklin D. Roosevelt went before both houses of Congress and, in ringing oratory, described the seventh of December as "a day that will live in infamy." By the time Congress adjourned, it had passed a war resolution, with only one member, Jeanette Rankin of Montana, opposed. The United States was at war with Japan and all thoughts of isolationism were a distant memory.

Four days later, despite not being obligated to do so under its pact with Japan, Germany declared war on the United States. America was engaged in a titanic struggle in two oceanic theatres in what the president was now calling the Second World War. A feeling of patriotism swept across the country unlike anything America had experienced.

At UCLA, as at every other college in the country, war, conscription, enlistment and service dominated daily classroom discussions. There was talk of deferments but in the law school, where Charlie and Lester were huddled with their fellow students in deep conversation about the war, most concluded that service was inevitable. Even in the medical school, Jonathan and his fellow students acknowledged that they might be needed at the front, although many still held open the hope they would be deferred until they finished their studies.

Jonathan and Charlie spent much of the following week speculating about their futures, even as they went through the motions of going to class. As they conducted their deliberations, Congress put in motion the selective service rules that would govern the conscription of fighting men for the war. By the end of the week, when Jonathan headed to the Abelstein household for *Shabbos* dinner, the country was on a wartime footing.

Jonathan had spoken to Leslie during the week, but he hadn't seen her since the attack on Pearl Harbor. She ran to the door

when Jonathan rang and worriedly threw her arms around her beaux. "What's going to happen? Will you be allowed to finish school? I'm so worried. Lester says that deferments will be very hard to come by and that he may apply to officer candidate school."

Jonathan kissed Leslie gently and tried to put on an air of confidence, but he knew he wasn't succeeding. He could only say, "Everything will be all right. Charlie and I have talked about this a lot during the week, but I haven't heard from Lester. Let's see what he has to say." Jonathan and Leslie took their places at the *Shabbos* table alongside the other members of the Abelstein family.

Uncharacteristically, Leslie was the first to speak. "Why did they have to do it? Why did those stupid Japanese bomb our ships and planes and throw us into the war?"

Equally uncharacteristically, Seymour motioned toward his son. "You were the history and political science major. What do you have to say to your sister's question?"

Lester was not accustomed to his father deferring to him. Almost comically, he tried to look authoritative as he affected his most scholarly tone, sat up straight and spoke. "Entering the 1930s, Japan's economy was on a roll but its natural resources were limited. As a result, Japan became aggressive and started grabbing resources by force, first with its invasion of Manchuria in 1931, then with its attack on Shanghai in 1932. Then, in 1937, Japan's forces knifed their way down the coast of China and, in a horrific attack, brutally overwhelmed the Chinese capital city of Nanking and slaughtered countless Chinese civilians. During the Nanking invasion, Japanese forces fired on the *USS Panay* as it evacuated American citizens from Nanking, killing three. In response to the public outrage, the policy gears in the United States began to turn."

"Yes, that was an outrage," volunteered Seymour, clearly happy with Lester's presentation.

Pleased to see that he still held the attention of his listeners, Lester continued. "The Japanese now found themselves in a protracted war in China and in even greater need of raw materials. Trade between the United States and Japan continued following the 1937 atrocities in Nanking, while the United States tried to resolve matters through diplomacy. But by 1939, it was clear that the negotiations were going nowhere and the United States terminated its trade agreement with Japan, especially the export of scrap iron and steel and oil."

"Why the attack if they could hide behind the Tripartite Pact they signed last year with Germany and Italy?" asked Jonathan.

"Fair point. Japan had seen its supply of raw materials from the United States dry up and its foreign assets frozen. At the same time, Japan also saw the United States aid spigots open wide to China. At that point, I think, the Japanese military concluded it had to act."

Fannie was the next to speak. "This is all too depressing. It's time to light candles and say the blessings so we can eat. I've prepared a wonderful roast and I don't want it to go to waste."

Jonathan and Leslie spent the next two days together, with much of that time fretting over the war and Jonathan's future. Leslie couldn't conceal her feelings. "You're not going to enlist, are you?" she asked repeatedly.

Jonathan tried to be as comforting as possible, but could only reply, "I don't know, Leslie. I'm confused."

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For Jonathan, the next few weeks were characterized by anguish and indecision. He had invested so much in preparing for and attending medical school and he was close to finishing his required courses. He thought he might wait until the end of the semester and then decide whether to enlist. But he found it impossible to keep his thoughts to himself.

All around him, second year medical school students were voicing the same concerns and raising the same issues. The con-

sensus seemed to be that of completing the year before enlisting. By so doing, the medical students would only be required to do third and fourth year rotations when they returned from the military. However, these practical thoughts were set against a nation in full military mobilization, with young men from all walks of life dropping everything to enlist.

Charlie had reported to the local draft board only a week after Pearl Harbor was attacked, but had only gotten as far as his military physical where his effort at enlisting came to an end because of the injury to his knee. One look at Charlie's knee and the physician concluded that he would never make it through basic training without risking greater damage. The kindly physician had given Charlie the opportunity to bring in his medical records in the hope they would pave a clearer path to enlistment. However, after reviewing Charlie's records, the physician reaffirmed his view that he could not qualify Charlie for military service.

Charlie had been crestfallen after failing his physical, but had quickly fallen back into his routine at UCLA. Nevertheless, Charlie's presence was a constant reminder to Jonathan that he had not taken the initiative—or, perhaps more straightforwardly, had not shown the courage—to enlist. Even Leslie's constant expressions of support did not help, as Jonathan knew that Leslie was motivated by fear of losing him to some far-off battlefield.

In the end, Jonathan's decision was spurred by an unlikely source—another letter from his father delivered by the same messenger. The letter had been written late in February, but arrived in the middle of March while Jonathan was taking midterm exams. He could not have come close to anticipating what the letter would report. It read:

Dear Jonathan:

I thank you for your letter, which I have read several times. I would so much like to meet Leslie but obviously, events have con-

spired to put off such a meeting for a while. Before you read on, I have one request. Much of what is in this letter is a matter of public record, but a few issues are highly sensitive. Please destroy this letter after you read it and only reveal its contents to Charlie, Leslie or anyone else in the most general and least revealing terms.

Life in England has been extremely difficult since Vanessa was taken from me. The worst part is I never had a chance to say goodbye. I have been spending more time at Vanessa's house, and Giles and Saundra have been amazingly attentive. Also, my work at Bletchley Park has provided me with endless challenges and opportunities to try to bury my sorrows. I have such wonderful memories of Vanessa and, when I feel despondent, I try to draw on those memories and somehow move forward.

I am eager to hear about your plans. Will you stay in medical school? Will you enlist? Do you plan on applying for officer candidate school? There must be a lot going through your mind now, but I know you will handle it. The thought of something bad happening to you causes me anguish in a way you could never imagine. On the other hand, we are all subject to a higher calling and each of us must find it within himself how to respond. Since that childhood prank when you mischievously snuck into Mrs. Zorrofsky's back yard to see if she was a witch, but chose to stay with her after she had injured herself trying to drive you away, I have always known that your conscience would stand up well to any test. My guess is that one of these days, I will be receiving a picture of you in uniform.

I think of you all the time. I know you neither require nor desire personal acco-

lades, but allow me to take this one opportunity to tell you how proud I am of all you have done. I could not have asked for anything more from a son. No matter how many miles separate us, my thoughts and admiration are always with you.

Now I have a little news about me. I hope you have been following events in North Africa. Our Eighth Army there has been having a tough go of it against Rommel's 15th and 21st Panzers. We have forces from all over the Commonwealth in Libya doing their best against Rommel, but the going has been agonizingly difficult. Rommel is smart and sly. They call him the Desert Fox.

Rommel has already advanced across the border—what we call the wire—into Egypt. He might have gone all the way to Cairo but for the need to return to Libya to fight a rear guard action in the port garrison of Tobruk. Our forces there had been besieged for 241 anguished days. Their fortunes turned late in November, thanks to the British Eighth, and they were able to break out, forcing Rommel's hand.

Rommel has since regrouped, and our boys have withdrawn east and formed a defensive line running south from the Libyan coastal city of Gazala down to a former Ottoman fort at Bir Hakeim. Rommel is now moving east along the coast toward our line of defense. Already, he has taken the coastal cities of Al Marg, Al Baydá and Darnah. To make matters worse, there is no real consensus on the field as to how to stop him. Our commander-in-chief of the Middle East Command, Field Marshall Sir Claude Auchinleck, seems to be leaving matters to his second in command, Sir Neil Ritchie, who, at least temporarily, has taken command of the Eighth.

The long and short of it is that matters have come to a difficult pass in North Africa, particularly because we have often been unable to get decoded information to the field quickly enough to alert our commanders as to Rommel's intentions. What is needed are more field personnel who can capitalize on decoded intelligence as it does come in, and combine that information with whatever else has been learned through German communication intercepts and Arab informants on the ground.

That is apparently where I come in. Alex Braxton, as you know, is second in command at what we now call MI6 and is now a close friend. Braxton is also a close confidant of Churchill. In addition, Braxton has recently discovered he is of Jewish descent and has taken up the cause of world Jewry as his own.

Braxton advises that Churchill is likely to make a trip to North Africa this summer, but first, he would like a seasoned professional to serve as a direct line of communication between himself and Ritchie's forces. At Churchill's behest, Alex has asked me if I would serve as that line of communication.

Alex knows how desperately ill at ease I have been since Vanessa's death and has suggested that my relocating to a new duty post could be an invigorating shot in the arm. He has also played upon my ego. He mischievously claims no one is better suited for the position than I, given my knowledge of the intelligence community learned at Bletchley and my command of both German and Arabic.

Alex has always been worried about Hitler taking command of the Suez and, from that vantage point, controlling all traffic

between the Mediterranean and Asia. But now, in his discussions with me, Alex has also gone to great pains to express his concern for the well-being of the Jews in Palestine. His worry is that if Rommel has already made one nearly-successful pass at crossing the border into Egypt, he may do it again. If Egypt falls into German hands, the fate of the Zionist movement in Palestine would be at grave risk. Alex wants me in North Africa to assess such a danger.

I agree with Alex's conclusions as to both my frame of mind and my usefulness in North Africa. You will not be surprised that his concern for the Jews of Palestine also resonates loudly. In my work at Bletchley Park, I have been privy to knowledge about Hitler's fiendish intentions with regard to the Jews that goes far beyond the atrocities of which the outside world is aware. I don't want his monstrous campaign to engulf Judaism's one last hope for a homeland, so I have agreed to take the position.

Alex also raised the delicate matter that if I were captured while not in military uniform, I could be summarily executed as a spy. By contrast, were I in uniform when captured, I would be treated as a prisoner of war. So he has arranged for me to be commissioned a major in the British army, attached to Ritchie's personal staff. Imagine me, a cultural anthropologist, turned military officer! I'll probably have to give up my yarmulke. But it's not forever.

Well, my dear son, I have said all I have to say. I will be undergoing a period of being briefed and trained before going to Africa. Everything will be fast moving, although my training could take a couple of months. Among other things, I have to learn how to use a firearm and bolster my physical

conditioning. So I don't know when I will next be in touch with you.

I know the course I have chosen is a dangerous one. But I am guided by a sense of righteousness and by the memories of two remarkable women who both met their end at the hands of the hideous monsters I will be dedicating myself to destroy. I know both imperatives will serve me well in whatever adversity I encounter.

Your loving father, Anton

After reading the letter twice, Jonathan knew what he had to do. Now, to tell Leslie!

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Jonathan and Leslie had spent hours talking about the war and Jonathan's possible involvement in the military. None of their conversations was satisfying to either of them. Despite the tension they had remained calm, and Jonathan was touched by Leslie's concern and devotion. He knew she was not going to like the news of his planned enlistment. He hoped he could find a way of telling her that would be gentle and cause her the least amount of pain.

Jonathan chose to tell Leslie the next time they drove up Mulholland Drive to look down on the city at night. The occasion came soon during an unusually warm evening for that time of year. They were looking out at the lights with Leslie's head tucked tightly between Jonathan's shoulder and his cheek. They had not talked about the war all evening and Jonathan was beginning to despair he would not find a good opportunity to break the news.

After they had been pressed to one another tightly for a while, Leslie looked up at Jonathan, kissed him tenderly on the lips and began to speak. "Jonathan, Father says the military is gearing up for a fighting force of nine million men, and that many doctors are going to be needed. He said that a lot of medical schools—

maybe even UCLA—are accelerating their programs to graduate doctors in three years instead of four. He thinks the Selective Service would allow any current medical school student to complete such an accelerated program of study because of the need to produce more doctors for military duty. Jonathan, if Father is right, you could complete medical school and be a doctor a year from this summer."

Jonathan could sense the fear in Leslie's voice and he knew how reluctant she must have been to press him in this manner. He stroked her cheek tenderly, trying to think of the kindest way to say what he had to say. Finally, he spoke. "Leslie, I want to become a doctor as much as you want me to become a doctor. And, I want you to be the one I kiss when they give me my diploma. But, sometimes, events get in the way and what may have seemed like the right course to follow suddenly doesn't seem so right."

Alarmed, Leslie now separated herself from Jonathan, holding his gaze as she did. "What are you saying?"

"Simply this: In less than nine years, my father has lost two wives. My father is inconsolable over these losses, but he understands that the same vile thugs who killed my mother and Vanessa are positioning themselves to commit many more atrocities. He understands that until Hitler and the Nazis are destroyed, they are a mortal threat to Europe, England and the world. He has put his career on hold so he can do everything in his power to stop Hitler and the menace he represents. At this very moment, my father is being commissioned as a major and preparing to join the British forces in North Africa."

"But, that's your father!"

Again, Jonathan tried to stroke Leslie cheek, but she brushed away his hand, as tears filled her eyes. "I understand how you feel. I don't blame you for anything you have said about my putting off my military responsibilities because I know you have said it out of love. I love you for it and, when I come back, I want you to be

my wife. But both my mother and Vanessa were killed by the Nazis. I loved them as much as I love my father. I can't sit back and allow their deaths to weigh on me, particularly while the Nazi menace that killed them is riding roughshod over the civilized world. That's why I have to act now, even if it means putting medical school on hold and leaving you, whom I dearly love, for a far-off battlefield. Tomorrow, I'm going to talk to the dean and then enlist as an army medic."

Leslie could only sob. After a few moments, she wiped away her tears. "I don't want to lose you, especially now that you have told me how much you love me and that you want to marry me. I don't know what to do. I'm so confused. My mind is in a daze, happy and sad at the same time."

Leslie began unbuttoning her blouse, but Jonathan tenderly put his hand over hers to stop her. "What are you doing?"

Leslie continued to unbutton her blouse. "Who knows how long it will be before I see you again and have the chance to make love to you? I'm so frightened, but I want you so much."

Jonathan's senses were on fire, but something else within him drove his reaction. He put his hand on Leslie's to stay what she was doing. Tenderly, he kissed the hand he was holding and looked at Leslie. " You always said you wanted to give yourself to the man you married. Well, I want to be that man. And I want the thought of being with you on our wedding night to stay with me no matter where I am. I want it to be the guiding hand that brings me home to you. Come on. Let's go your house and tell your parents we are engaged."

Leslie smiled bravely and firmly took the wheel. "My parents like you so much. They're going to be excited when we tell them that you're going to be their son-in-law."

Chapter 11
The Warsaw Ghetto
January 1941–April 1943

At the time of his death in 1930, Hannah's father, Dr. Josef Herskovitz, had accumulated a small estate sufficient to take care of Hannah's mother, Rose. When Rose passed on four years after her husband's death and a year after her daughter's brutal murder, the estate passed to Hannah's brother, Abraham.

Abraham was prudent and cautious. He had used only a small part of his parents' estate to improve his modest but successful business repairing bicycles, sewing machines and silverware. His children, Janós and Irena, attended good schools. Most importantly, there was always food on the table, especially for *Shabbos* dinner. But in the Jewish community of Danzig there was a palpable unease, and Abraham felt it.

Danzig had enjoyed a reasonable amount of commercial success since being declared a free city in 1920. Among those who benefitted from the favorable Danzig economy were Abraham and his family, as well as the city's 7,000 other Jews. But with the emergence of the Nazi party in Danzig in 1933, Jewish life began changing rapidly, with Jews precluded from holding public office and positions of responsibility. So when Abraham inherited his mother's house and estate in 1934, the Jews of Danzig were feeling vulnerable.

Even after the emergence of the Nazi party, the presence in Danzig of a high commissioner appointed by the League of Nations served to provide some small measure of comfort for Danzig's minorities. But thoughts of security began to dim in 1937, when the League of Nations' minority rights provisions

applicable to Danzig lapsed. The removal of the laws that had minimally protected Danzig's Jews exposed them to the reservoir of anti-Semitism that had long been present in Danzig, waiting only for the right time to surface. It happened quickly as violent anti-Jewish pogroms swirled around the Jewish community, leaving the destruction of 60 homes and businesses in its wake.

Anticipating the possibility of such a pogrom, the Jewish community of Danzig had pooled its funds to enable those who wished to leave to emigrate to Palestine. Abraham had willingly contributed to the fund.

After the pogroms, the Jewish community considered its fate. Aided by the fund, more than half of the Jews of Danzig had left the city. Painful though it was, Abraham was prepared to leave his parents' home and most of his inheritance in pursuit of an uncertain journey to a far-off land about which he knew little. However, on the eve of departure, everything went wrong.

Mittel, like Rose before her, suffered from severe arthritis that often prevented her from getting around. The week before departure, the arthritis became so painful that Mittel could barely rise from her bed. Even at that, Abraham and Janós, now a good-sized boy of 11, were prepared to carry Mittel and do whatever was necessary for her to feel comfortable. However, the day before the planned departure, Abraham tripped and broke his leg. All hope of leaving was abandoned. Two days later, Abraham and his family waved goodbye to their friends who were starting the long journey to Palestine.

Abraham's leg got better and Mittel's condition improved. For a while, the family was able to return to some degree of normalcy. But in the next two years, as two of the city's four synagogues were burned to the ground, Mittel's condition worsened. Travel was now out of the question.

By 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland, only about 1,000 Jews—Abraham, Mittel, Janós and Irena among them—remained

in Danzig. They were restricted to two small ghettos in the city where they lived in wretched conditions for almost two years. Then, one night in March 1941, shouting troops marching through the ghetto compound awakened the sleeping family. Groggily, they tried to make sense of what was happening and realized the troops were banging on the doors of the ghettos' inhabitants. Finally, the pounding came to their door and two uniformed Germans barked out orders.

The two Germans gave Abraham and his family 30 minutes to pack their belongings and assemble in the ghetto courtyard. With little heat in the Herskovitz's sleeping quarters, everyone—especially Mittel—was stiff from the cold. The family packed as much as it could. Abraham and Janós supported Mittel and tried to comfort her as they walked down the stairs into the frigid night. Mittel did not say much but she hurt so much, she thought only of death.

Finally, the family assembled in the square with the other Jews who lived in the Danzig Ghetto. They were directed to climb into trucks and were then taken to a railhead. There, freezing from the cold and beside themselves with fear, they were packed into frigid freight cars and sent to the Jewish Ghetto that had been established in Warsaw in October 1940.

Since its creation, the Warsaw Ghetto had become home—if it could be called that—to the city's almost 400,000 Jews, as well as to Jews from other Polish communities such as Danzig. The ghetto was sealed off from the rest of the city by a ten-foot high wall. At less than 3.38 square kilometers, or approximately 900 acres, the ghetto was so small that overcrowding and infectious disease were rampant. People slept side by side in human pens, often with seven or eight crowded into one wretched room. Pedigree was a thing of the past. Scholars were squeezed in with beggars. In such pestilential surroundings, all that counted was the will to live.

This tableau of misery greeted Abraham and his family as they arrived in the Ghetto in January 1941. Abraham was introduced to one of the ghetto's leaders who surveyed the newcomers. Mittel's sickly condition was obvious to the man.

"Let me be blunt," said the man. "We have plenty of doctors, but our stock of medicine is rapidly running out. We have a small amount of food that is rationed carefully, and is never enough. We are made to exist on one tenth of the calories consumed by the Germans. We will do everything we can for your wife and your family. We try to make the old and sick as comfortable as possible. But with severely limited supplies of food and medicine and rampant illness, there is only so much we can do. I will put your wife on the list of those who need immediate medical attention, but I implore you to be patient. You have entered a world where hardship reigns and where we struggle from day to day to preserve our humanity against great odds."

Abraham bowed his head. The ghetto in Danzig had presented severe hardships, but this place was far worse. *I wonder where it will end*, thought Abraham. Composing himself, Abraham thanked the man for his consideration. "I am able bodied and an expert mechanic. I can repair just about anything. Please put me to work."

"Thank you. We will do that. Everyone has to carry his weight in this place."

"Is there a school where my children may learn?"

"Yes. We have no shortage of teachers."

"Good. Both of my children are able learners. Also, Janós is very strong for his age. He can be counted on to do the work of a boy several years older."

"I have also taken note of that and I believe we might have a place for Janós."

The weeks and months that followed were harrowing almost beyond imagination for Abraham and his family. Every day people

died, often in large numbers. As the carts carrying the dead made their interminable rounds, the ghetto's residents looked with despair and wondered if they would be next. These thoughts did not elude Abraham as he observed Mittel fading away day by day. Finally, on a rainy spring afternoon in April, Mittel succumbed. She weighed barely 80 pounds and Abraham, who had also lost much weight, could hardly recognize his wife in her deathbed. Neighbors tried to be comforting, but soon the imperative of survival drew everyone back to whatever life remained for them.

True to his wish, Abraham had been put in charge of a small machine shop that was used to produce and repair implements needed for the maintenance of the poorly constructed and crumbling ghetto structures. There were broken hammers, shovels, pick axes, screwdrivers and wheel barrels. Occasionally, other implements of a less innocent nature also crossed Abraham's workbench. One day a bayonet might appear for repair. The next day, a hunting knife might show up. Then, there might be an Astra 600 pistol with a jammed trigger or a Mauser 24T Gewehr rifle with a broken barrel that had been smuggled into the ghetto.

Abraham liked his work and used it to escape from the hardships of ghetto life. He acquired a reputation as the person to go to for the repair of pistols and rifles. He kept some of the repaired weapons in payment for the repair of other weapons. Abraham's workshop had a concealed closet where he stored all of the repaired weapons he retained. Soon, he had a small arsenal. One of these weapons was a hunting knife, the hilt of which Abraham had fixed. Abraham had brought the knife back to a level of sharpness that required the utmost care. He made a small scabbard for the knife and gave the knife and sheath to Janós, whose studies were interspersed with foraging missions outside the gates of the ghetto.

Had the occupants of the ghetto been forced to subsist on the scant supply of food permitted by the Germans, even more would

have died of malnutrition and starvation than was actually the case. As it was, the number of dead was increasing agonizingly. By early 1942, over 80,000 of the ghetto's occupants had died of starvation, disease or both. A small black market had developed outside of the city where enterprising Poles, who were willing to risk the severe penalties for transacting business with Jews, sold food and other needed items at extraordinary premiums to the occupants of the ghetto. Some ghetto inhabitants tried to scale the walls of the ghetto in search of food. However, since these were well guarded, ghetto occupants had to find other means of engaging in such commerce. To this end, the city's sewers had become the ghetto's gateway to commerce.

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Every day, Janós, his friend, Manfred—or Manny, as he was known—and about a dozen other young men would navigate the diseased and rat-infested sewers under the ghetto in search of food, bullets for Abraham's and other arsenals, and other contraband. They timed their incursions to take place at dusk when visibility was marginal, but still light enough to get around.

Janós and Manny had become expert at their forays to the outside city. The city's sewer system was a giant labyrinth, and Janós and Manny were fast becoming knowledgeable about many of its twists, turns and convolutions. Over time, they established shadowy connections among the city's inhabitants in a variety of locations and made these connections a steady source of business. The boys seemed to have a sixth sense and somehow knew when Nazi patrols were in the area or danger was at hand. But one day during the early summer of 1942, that sixth sense failed them.

As they were leaving the sewer, they came upon a uniformed Nazi soldier who had stopped for a moment to delight in a rare stub of a cigarette. The soldier was a small man. He had leaned his rifle against the side of a nearby building and was busy taking

his first puff. As he enjoyed his cigarette, he heard a sound like metal on pavement. Since it had been a long day, he decided to take little notice. Then, to his amazement, he saw two waif-like figures emerge from out of nowhere. Startled, the soldier threw down the butt and grabbed his pistol.

At the same time the soldier saw Janós and Manny, the boys saw the soldier. They tried to run, but the soldier was too fast. He aimed his gun at the fleeing boys and pumped two bullets into Manny's back. Manny fell, blood gushing from his wounds. Instead of continuing to run, Janós froze at the sight of his friend in the throes of death. A split second elapsed and then Janós realized that he, too, was likely to be shot. But no shot came. Instead, the soldier was fumbling with his pistol, which had jammed. The soldier threw down the handgun and then incautiously turned his back as he headed quickly for the wall where his rifle was leaning.

Janós had grown to become a tall boy, and he towered over the soldier. But he suffered from the malnutrition that victimized everyone in the ghetto, and he was not strong. By any rational standard, Janós should have run while the soldier was going for his rifle. Instead, Janós remembered his knife and unsheathed the weapon. With a cry of fury and sorrow, he lunged at the surprised soldier who had turned around at the sound of Janós' screams. But it was too late for the soldier. Janós extended his entire body and threw himself on the smaller man. Then, with a fury Janós had no idea he possessed, he buried the knife in the soldier's neck and twisted it until the soldier slumped lifelessly to the ground.

Shaken, Janós had the presence of mind to move Manny's body away from the sewer opening. When that grisly task was completed, Janós descended into the sewer, pulled the grate over him and returned to the ghetto where he cleaned up as best he could before seeking out his father. Then, with Abraham by his side for

support, Janós told Manny's parents what had happened. Janós never told his father or anyone else about the soldier he had killed. But Janós had tasted killing. He did not find it unpleasant.

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Abraham did not want Janós to go out on any more foraging missions. But Janós objected and, in truth, the remnants of the depleted ghetto were in desperate need of anything they could get from the outside world.

Then, matters got terribly worse in the ghetto. Starting in late July 1942, German SS units, accompanied by German police, stormed through. These units gathered thousands of the ghetto's inhabitants and forced them into nearby freight cars bound for a new hell called Treblinka, 80 kilometers away on the rail line from Warsaw to Bialystok.

The ghetto's Jews were not totally cut off from the outside world. Until that time, Treblinka had been known merely as a deplorable labor camp. The knowledge that it had recently been enlarged to become a killing center had not yet seeped into the ghetto. But, the inhabitants of the ghetto had heard that all over Poland, their fellow Jews were being killed in staggering numbers. Knowing this, many of the ghetto's residents resisted being taken to the waiting boxcars. These resistors were mercilessly gunned down. Their SS murderers were only too happy to unleash their fury on the unarmed and helpless souls whose only infraction had been a desire not to be herded off to their deaths.

Day in and day out, as September unwound, the Herskovitz family watched this wretched scene of horrific brutality unfold. Miraculously, they were able to avoid being rounded up themselves. Janós kept to the sewers during this period and was able to find out when the next roundup would occur. Armed with such information, Janós would then dash back to his father's workshop, where Abraham, Irena and he would hide in the arsenal closet. Incredibly, the SS and their police counterparts had not discovered

the closet as they swept through the ghetto looking for hapless victims to shove onto the next transport.

By the middle of the month, 265,000 of the ghetto's Jews had been deported to Treblinka, never to be heard from again. Without explanation, the roundups stopped for a few months. But, in January 1943, the dreaded SS units returned, intent on packing up the ghetto's remaining residents and freighting them to Treblinka.

This time, the ghetto's residents resisted and the Germans were able to deport only about 5,000 of their number. For three months, an eerie calm shrouded the ghetto. Its remaining 50,000 underfed and sickly residents willed themselves to go through the hollow motions of everyday life. Then, in April, the SS reappeared determined to deport all of the ghetto's remaining residents. Armed only with outdated rifles and pistols such as those stored in Abraham's weapons closet, the ghetto fighters held off the heavily-armed, better-trained and well-positioned German forces.

Days slipped into weeks and still the ghetto's motley but determined group of defenders held the SS at bay. During this time, each member of the Herskovitz family had a role to play. Irena had been working with a doctor for several months, following him in an increasingly fruitless effort at patching up the wounded and boosting the morale of the not-yet fallen. Abraham was in charge of dispensing weapons for his sector of the ghetto and also helped in defending the ghetto's walls. Janós did what he had been doing all along. Each day in the late afternoon, he would descend into the sewer tunnels and try to bring back whatever he could from outside of the ghetto.

Almost four months passed and still the ghetto fighters pressed on, though their ammunition was low, their food had almost run out and their frame of mind was dispirited. Everyone knew they could not last much longer, but they fought on.

On April 19, a particularly formidable array of SS troopers and local police massed outside of the ghetto. The residents inside

steeled themselves for what might be a final showdown. Janós had been dispatched earlier than usual to see if he could find any ammunition outside the walls of the ghetto. He had emerged from the tunnels and was making his way to one of his contacts when he heard gunfire. Janós could not see the ghetto from where he was but when he looked up, he became sick. Everywhere, flames and smoke were shooting up from the ghetto as if the entirety of it was being consumed by fire.

Alarmed and filled with foreboding, Janós rushed back into the tunnels and headed for his father's shop inside the ghetto. Before Janós could get to the shop, he was intercepted by Manny's father, Andresej. As compassionately as he could, Andresej told Janós that Abraham had been killed that day defending the city.

Janós held back the sobs that had to wait and asked Andresej about Irena. Andresej pointed in the direction of what had been the ghetto's makeshift hospital, but was now a façade of charred walls. "I'm so sorry, Janós. When I last saw Irena, she was heading in that direction."

Janós did not wait for Andresej to say more. He ran toward the hospital, yelling out his sister's name. When he arrived, he found that the building had been so consumed by the voracious flames that it no longer looked like a building. Janós watched for a few minutes, then turned around and threw up. He could not recall a time when his sister and he had been separated. Now, he thought, she was likely a smoldering corpse. The thought sickened him and he threw up again. Then he composed himself, collected what he could, swore he would one day avenge the deaths of his family members, and headed for the sewers.

At the end of the day, the Warsaw Ghetto fell. Some of its weary and dispirited survivors were shot. Others were packed off to the camps. Janós hid in the city outside of the ghetto. But the next day, hungry and despondent, he was apprehended and shoved into a rail car bound for Treblinka.

Chapter 12
The 95th Evacuation Hospital Sees Its First Combat
November 1942–July 1943

In November 1942, Jonathan received the terrible news that his father had been killed while on a secret mission in Libya. The numbness brought on by Anton's passing was compounded by Jonathan's frustration at not knowing how his father had died or, for that matter, how he had lived during his last years in England. What had his father done at Bletchley Park that was important enough to take him away from his secure and cherished academic pursuits here in America and put Vanessa and him at great risk in England?

It was, therefore, a great consolation when Jonathan received an official letter from Alex Braxton at MI6. In the letter, Braxton described how Anton had been grievously wounded, captured and brought to a German detention facility in Libya. A British scouting party later came upon the detention facility after it had been abandoned. There, they found Anton's body. In addition to the bullet wounds to his body, they observed slit marks on Anton's wrist. It was clear Anton had taken his own life to avoid being interrogated. For that, Braxton expressed his personal regret and, on behalf of the English people, his profound respect.

Braxton's letter went on to describe Anton's role at Bletchley Park—a role that capitalized on Anton's knowledge of German language and culture as well as his training as an anthropologist. Drawing on these skills, Anton had been placed in charge of detecting large-scale Nazi strategies from the vast intelligence trove provided by Bletchley Park's code breakers on a daily basis.

Indeed, according to Braxton, it had been Anton who first identified the *Einsatzgruppen,* Hitler's paramilitary killing units in the Soviet Union. Braxton was so disturbed by Anton's findings that he had alerted Churchill, with the result that Churchill agreed to meet with Anton and receive a report on the *Einsatzgruppen.* After their meeting, an enraged Churchill went on the air. To the extent permitted by the need to protect Bletchley Park's covert activities, Churchill's radio speech brought to the world's attention, for the first time, the atrocities taking place in Russia at the hands of the *Einsatzgruppen.*

Braxton's letter notwithstanding, Jonathan continued to be deeply depressed by his father's death. Even more frustrating to Jonathan was the fact that he was stuck in the United States instead of avenging his father's death in Europe. Every time he gazed upon his surroundings in Camp Breckenridge, he got even more frustrated with being in Morganfield, Kentucky. Had he remained in medical school, he kept telling himself, he would be in his third year and doing rotations. Instead, he was in south central Kentucky where the nearest city of consequence, Nashville, was in the next state. If it weren't for the occasional weekend leave that enabled him and one or two of his friends to explore the nearby Shawnee National Forest, there would be absolutely nothing to do.

He and his fellow soldiers in the 95th Evacuation Hospital had gone through what seemed like dozens of drills during which they had erected, provisioned and then taken down the myriad number of tent facilities that comprised a modern evacuation hospital. They practiced during the day, at night, in the rain and in the mud. Jonathan and his buddies had gone through the drill of setting up and dismantling the hospital so many times, they dreamt about little else.

At least Fort Warren, Wyoming, where the 95th had previously been based, was only three miles from Cheyenne where the en-

listed personnel could go for a little fun and entertainment on weekends. More importantly, the fort was close enough to the west coast so that when Jonathan and his buddies had a little leave, they could hitch rides to places like Los Angeles and San Francisco. Jonathan had taken advantage of this opportunity the previous July, just before the 95th moved to Kentucky, and he was now reflecting on his visit with Leslie.

The trip, made on an unforgiving military personnel vehicle, had taken two very bumpy days. Despite looking bedraggled on his arrival, Jonathan had been greeted by a veritable fusillade of kisses as Leslie threw her arms around his neck and thought nothing about restraining herself. Leslie was now teaching in Long Beach, but she had arranged for leave so that she could stay with her parents and be with Jonathan while he was in town. Charlie was also on hand, as was his recently-arrived brother.

Randy had completed his naval architecture studies, had been sworn in as a junior officer in the Royal Navy and was part of its architecture operations in London. His commanding officer knew that Randy's brother was in Los Angeles. When the request came in for the assignment of a naval architect to the understaffed Long Beach Navy Yard, the officer had recommended Randy.

Randy had been delighted with the assignment and, for several months, had been working in the Office of the Naval Architect at its Long Beach facility. But for his accent, he had effortlessly slid into the role of an American. He even had a new American girlfriend, Cybil Goodman, who was as eager to please Randy as Dianne had been to satisfy Charlie. For the first few nights that Jonathan was in LA, the six young people made the rounds of the city's leading nightspots with no talk of war and only talk of the various couples' future plans permitted.

In addition to his work at the Naval Yard, Randy had found himself a weekend singing gig at a small nightclub in Long Beach frequented by navy men and shipyard workers. He had been

performing for about six weeks, and the occasion of his performances had become cause for Charlie, Dianne, Cybil and Leslie to cram into the little nightclub and listen to Randy croon. So, it was that the weekend after Jonathan's arrival, everyone packed into the nightclub and waited for Randy to make his appearance.

When Randy took the stage, he motioned for the noisy crowd to quiet down and then sang the standards of the day: "I Had the Craziest Dream," "You'll Never Know" and "Taking a Chance on Love." By the time Randy finished the last of these, there was a hush in the room and Jonathan had to admit that Randy was quite the crooner. Then Randy belted out one of the year's smash hits, "That Old Black Magic." When he finished, the crowd of sailors went wild with applause. Randy took it all in appreciatively, applauded himself and then headed down to the table occupied by Jonathan, Leslie and the others.

As Randy approached, everyone at the table stood and applauded. Randy seated himself and accepted a drink. Cybil put one arm around her boyfriend, the nightclub entertainer, and kissed him unabashedly without any attempt to disguise her desire. Jonathan was embarrassed at Cybil's transparent display, but he didn't look away. Mesmerized, Jonathan was surprised at the almost indifferent way in which Randy acknowledged Cybil's advances.

After the nightclub performance, Jonathan and Leslie drove back to Los Angeles where Jonathan was to catch a ride back to Wyoming the next day. Though it was late, they decided to drive to Mulholland Drive so they could spend their last few hours together looking down at the city and watching the stars. They talked about the war, where Jonathan was likely to be assigned after Wyoming and the wonderful wedding that Leslie's parents had planned.

Their lives had been so busy since Jonathan's arrival that they had not had much privacy. They had been intimate whenever they could, but Leslie's parents had planned a full slate of activities for

Jonathan's visit. Seymour had even taken two days off from his dental practice so he could spend time with his future son-in-law.

Unfortunately for Jonathan, Seymour's availability meant Jonathan had to listen to endless talk about wedding plans and the war, with the result that Leslie and Jonathan were rarely alone. But now, as they looked down on the lights of the city glistening like gems in a tiara, they delighted in the fact that they were finally alone. They kissed tenderly and then more eagerly, releasing the pent-up passion that comes from being apart.

The next morning, Jonathan kissed his teary-eyed fiancée goodbye and caught the military transport back to Wyoming. Not long after that, the 95th was transferred to Camp Breckenridge in Morganfield, Kentucky.

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Jonathan was still engaged in thoughts of LA and Leslie when word spread around the camp that they were heading for Camp Shanks in Orangeburg, New York and from there, to action abroad. *At last*, thought Jonathan. Busily, he and the other enlisted men began the process of dismantling and packing in preparation for the trip. A week later, the entire unit was in Orangeburg, waiting for the order to board ship. The order came a week later. The men were given a 72-hour leave before heading overseas—not enough time for Jonathan to return to California before shipping off.

Most of Jonathan's buddies in the 95th utilized their leave to go to New York City and lose themselves in the wonders of that magnificent metropolis, made more wondrous by the many servicemen who were now plying its varied neighborhoods. On inspiration, Jonathan chose to visit Cornell. Once on campus, Jonathan retraced his collegiate years. As usual, spring in Ithaca was magnificent. But something was wrong. Then, Jonathan realized what it was. There were no men on campus. Only then did it dawn on Jonathan how universal the war effort had become.

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On April 15, the 95th—along with more than 7,000 other military personnel—boarded the USAT Mariposa, once a luxury liner in the Matson Line, now a trans-Atlantic troop transport. Bunks were piled high in the ship's staterooms; often, 12 men would be crowded into a cabin intended for two. There was intense speculation aboard ship as to where it was headed. Not until land was sighted nine days later, and with it, the exotic architecture of North Africa, did the ship's officers advise the men and women aboard that they were disembarking in Casablanca, French Morocco.

There, the nurses of the 95th were housed in a former school while the men set up a temporary tent camp about a mile outside of the city. From Casablanca, the evacuation hospital was transported to the provincial town of Oujida where it finally established operations in support of the nearby 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment. At Oujida, the hospital unit began to see casualties and, with consternation and then determination, the personnel of the hospital performed the tasks for which they had trained.

With Rommel on the run in the Western Desert of North Africa, the Allies focused attention on the invasion of the European continent. Two avenues of attack presented themselves: the invasion of Italy from the south or a channel landing on the northwest coast of France. Each point of entry had its advocates and it took a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt in Casablanca early in 1943 to reach agreement on a southern campaign. The campaign was codenamed Operation Husky. Spearheaded by the United States 7th Army under General George S. Patton and the British 8th Army under Montgomery, Husky's goal was to take Sicily from the Germans. From there, an amphibious assault could be launched across the narrow three-mile Strait of Messina to the toe of Italy at either San Giovanni or Reggio.

Soon, the 95th found itself picking up stakes as it moved closer to Sicily in support of Operation Husky. On July 6, it arrived at

Ain el-Turk, Algeria. In quick order, the 230 enlisted men of the field hospital had set up a fully-equipped mobile medical center. The hospital was housed in tents where wounded soldiers returning from the front could be received, evaluated, surgically repaired, and provided with the first steps toward rehabilitation.

At Ain el-Turk, the casualties mounted. Everyone in the hospital unit worked full tilt. Jonathan, who had advised his officers of his medical experience, was assigned to helping patients in recovery before they were evacuated. Despite a year and half of medical school and all of the months of military preparation, Jonathan had never imagined the world that lay before him. Grievously injured soldiers were everywhere. Rugged men from all walks of life were reduced to sobs and prayer. Some arrived with limbs mangled or severed. Some had head wounds that obliterated mouths, ears and chins. There were eye wounds of all varieties. In the saddest of cases, there was paralysis. Each day brought with it long hours and the destructive emotional impact of seeing so much carnage and desperation.

After a day of working in the surgical recovery unit, Jonathan often collapsed onto his cot without eating, overcome with the enormity of the day's tasks. But with the others, he persevered. What troubled Jonathan most was the disastrous effect of infection. Despite heroic medical measures, the 95th kept losing men to infection. A feeling of helplessness grated away at Jonathan. The miracle drug, penicillin, had recently been given to wounded American fighting men in the nearby assault on the Algerian city of Oran. However, its use was not widespread and only snippets of information regarding its efficacy had reached Jonathan's unit.

Soon, Jonathan's shock metamorphosed into dogged resolve and he began to feel the adrenalin rush of being in a theater of war. Strangely, he loved the fearsome sound of warplanes flying overhead. He thrilled as the sound of battle got closer, first a din, then a rush of cacophonous noise, then volley after volley of thun-

derous instruments of war. He even liked the smell of grease and petroleum from the motor pool where the rescue vehicles were parked and maintained. The adrenalin rush of engaging the enemy provided him with the strength and single-mindedness needed to work day in and day out with horribly-wounded patients.

Jonathan's commitment to duty did not go unnoticed and he was soon awarded a commendation for his efforts. The work did not abate, however, and Jonathan and his fellow hospital workers wondered how long they could keep up the momentum.

Chapter 13
Janós Endures the Death Camp at Treblinka
May–August 1943

By May 1943, the forced labor camp near the small village of Treblinka had evolved well beyond its original mission and become a primary facility for the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews. As with all the Jewish killing centers established by the Reich, Treblinka could trace its mission back to January 20, 1942. On that date, in a stylish villa located in the placid Berlin suburb of Wansee, 15 high-ranking Nazi officials met to discuss the Final Solution of the Jewish Question—shorthand for the extermination of the Jews of Europe.

SS General Rienhard Heydrich was among the officials present at Wansee. The young general's dedication to the Nazi cause was exceeded only by the *schadenfreude* he felt at the prospect of murdering Europe's Jewish population. Heydrich was the chief of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the Reich Security Main Office or RSHA. The RSHA had been established in 1939 after the German invasion of Poland and combined all of the Nazi security and intelligence services in Poland into one exhaustive network dedicated to suppressing the occupied populace through terror tactics on an unprecedented scale.

The RSHA had first been given responsibility for the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Nazi death squads identified by Anton while at Bletchley Park. The *Einsatzgruppen* had been responsible for the murder of Jews in the occupied Soviet Union in unprecedented numbers. But that was not enough for Germany's depraved *Fuhrer*. After the conference at *Wansee*, the RSHA, under Heydrich, was

given direct authority and responsibility for exterminating all of European Jewry. The construction of killing centers located near the Polish communities of Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor were the outgrowth of the RSHA's enhanced responsibility.

The organizational aspects of these killing centers rose to the highest level of German proficiency. Treblinka was the intended destination for Jews from the Warsaw area. Sobibor was the intended destination for Jews from other occupied areas including Austria, the Netherlands, and France. Belzec was the intended destination for Jews from the Lublin and Lvov areas. In these places of inexpressible horror, those Polish Jews who had not already been slaughtered by the *Einsatzgruppen* would meet their deaths more efficiently—by being gassed and then incinerated. As if they were dealing with spent cartridges or consumed cans of beans, the Nazi overseers of these unspeakable facilities kept meticulous records of those who had arrived and perished.

The killing operation had become known as *Operation Reinhard* in honor of Rienhard Heydrich, who had not lived to see the grisly results of his labors.

Construction of the killing center at Treblinka, known as Treblinka II, was completed in July 1942. It functioned as the extermination camp component of the original forced labor camp, known as Treblinka I. A four-kilometer rail spur that originated at the nearby Malkinia rail junction connected the two camps. Day in and day out, trains carrying 50 or 60 boxcars would rumble along the main Warsaw-Bialystok rail line en route to Malkinia. At Malkinia, groupings of 20 cars at a time would be backed along the rail spur to a staging area at Treblinka II.

There, the stifling cars would be opened and their dazed occupants, having no idea what was happening, would be shoved out from their boxcar transports—now dank with the overwhelming smell of urine and feces. Desperate and frightened beyond words, the human cargo would be prodded to the staging area.

Once assembled, the men and boys would be separated from the women and children and each group would be made to disrobe and abandon their belongings. No one was spared this ultimate indignity of undressing in public—not grandmothers, grandfathers, scholars, rabbis, doctors, scientists or teachers. No one. In the presence of one another, they were all reduced to little more than the dust to which they would soon return.

From the shadows, wretched creatures—Jews from prior transports—would emerge to collect the clothing and other belongings abandoned by the newly arrived cargo. The guards—some SS henchmen, but many recruited from the local population—would then direct the naked and helpless victims through a narrow pathway to an enclosed facility they had been told was a shower room. Once in the facility, the victims found no showers—only outlets that allowed carbon monoxide gas to work its way into the closed facility. The lucky ones expired quickly. Those less lucky died protracted, agonizing deaths.

When it was over, the shower room was laden with the corpses of the fallen. The corpses had to be removed so that the gas jets could claim their next set of victims. This unforgiving duty of such immense disgust and inhumanity would not be assigned to the guards. Rather, the task of removing the corpses was given to Jews from prior transports—Jews who had been singled out for such assignment because of their size and the condition of their health. Under the watchful eye of the camp's guards, these unfortunates, known as the *Sonderkommando*, or special detachment, would gather up the limp corpses and carry them to huge outdoor open pits. There, the corpses would be burned, turning the air into such a hellish inferno that few could tolerate for more than a few minutes the acrid smell of burning human flesh.

The creatures who made up the *Sonderkommando* felt neither pain nor emotion, only the weight of the corpses they hauled out of the gas chambers. They lived for no reason other than to see

another day. For most, these days were numbered as they fell from malnutrition, the sheer weight of their tasks or the periodic slaughter of their numbers by the guards.

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During his many forays outside the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto, Janós had been able to find scraps of food with regularity. When he arrived at Treblinka II, he looked more nourished and stronger than most. He was immediately taken out of the line assigned to the doomed and directed to a building that served as a dormitory for the *Sonderkommando*. The building was bare, with nothing but rows of wooden planks used as bunks.

It was dusk outside and the men, having already eaten the paltry cup of gruel served to them as their evening meal, were now in their bunks. In the dark, Janós could barely make out the wretched figures. Had it been lighter, Janós would have observed that the men looked barely alive. Their skin looked transparent and waxy—a mere coating for their skeletons. Their bones stuck out of their gaunt frames. Vacant with the horrors they had seen and experienced, their eyes were sunken in their sallow faces. They were alive, but barely.

Janós was given a cup of gruel and two guards directed him to a rough third level plank that would serve as a bunk for the lanky Janós. The guards had Ukrainian accents and joked about how Janós' good looks would be altered when he became a corpse.

Janós slumped down on his bed of wood. Soon he heard a whisper, or what was perhaps a murmur, from the bunk below him. He couldn't detect whether he was hearing words or whimpering. Exhausted, Janós fell asleep.

The next morning at sunrise, the inmates were given 30 minutes to relieve themselves and eat their morning cup of gruel. Only the man who occupied the bunk below Janós' bunk acknowledged him. The rest took their gruel, relieved themselves

in an adjacently located crude outhouse and awaited the inevitable screaming of the guards who were none too happy to be up so early.

Under the watchful eye of the guards, the inmates were ushered out at gunpoint to their duties for the day. Most of the men walked unseeingly. All communication was prohibited. Anyone who fell behind or whispered could expect to feel a rifle butt in his back or across the back of his head. If a man could not rise from such a punishment, he was shot where he lay.

Most of the men were assigned to the hellish work of collecting the prior day's corpses and carting them off to the awaiting open-air furnaces where they would be placed on grates made of railroad ties, doused with oil and. The heartier ones, like Janós, were assigned to a different task.

Earlier victims of the camp had been buried in large mass graves. However, the *Operation Rienhard* officials had decided to disinter these mass graves, least there be any evidence of the grisly work performed at the camp. Once exhumed, the bodies were taken to the cremation furnaces for incineration along with the more recently gassed corpses. Many of the mass graves had already been exhumed, but there was still much work to be done, all of it by pick and shovel. For this purpose, Janós was given a shovel and instructed to dig.

Janós worked under the hot sun with little water and hardly any respite. His back screamed at him almost from the start, but the menacing look of the guards was much more fear-inducing than the pain Janós felt in his back. Worse, men who couldn't continue shoveling were shot in the pits where they were working and others workers were required to remove these fresh corpses along with the decaying remnants of those corpses that had been exhumed.

Each time Janós' shovel encountered the decayed remains of a corpse, he would dig around and under the corpse and then

throw the disgusting remains in a pile for transport to the incinerator pits. After a day of such work, Janós was so tired and so repulsed that he thought of throwing himself at a guard in the hope of being shot. However, after several days of the hateful work, Janós began to dig without feeling or revulsion. His only sensation was the instinct to survive.

One day, after Janós and his fellow inmates had returned from digging in the mass graves and were settled into their bunks after their evening gruel, the same two Ukrainian guards who had joked about Janós' good looks came to his bunk and asked him to get down. Janós was exhausted and could barely raise his head. The guards roughly pulled Janós from his crude bed and demanded that he follow them.

It was about eight o'clock at night. As Janós walked in front of the guards away from the prisoner's barracks, he could see that the rest of the camp was made up of more substantial buildings and interior roads. Janós also observed that the camp was surrounded by a barbed wire fence interwoven with sticks, so that outsiders could not see inside the encampment. Guard towers had been situated at periodic positions along the fence and several passenger vehicles and trucks were parked alongside the dirt roads within the camp. Surprisingly, Janós did not see many guards. But then again, he thought, it was dark, most of the prisoners were asleep, and perhaps, the guards were having dinner or going to sleep.

In a few moments, Janós and the two Ukrainian guards arrived at a well-lit area where Janós could hear a variety of human sounds coming from the adjacent buildings—some singing, some arguing and some just talking. Janós assumed the voices were those of the camp's remaining guards whom he had not previously seen. Janós was so consumed by the contrast between what he heard at this end of the camp and the near absence of any human sound where he had been that he almost tripped over a

bench. The feel of the guard's gun muzzle in his ribs made Janós pay more attention.

Finally, the guards ushered Janós to the front door of one of the structures in the compound. The guards were smiling as they knocked on the door. Janós began to sweat as frissons of fear engulfed his brain. His stomach churned as he wondered what sort of fiendish hell awaited him. The door opened to a comfortably appointed large room and Janós could see only one man who occupied the room. He was large and well-built with blond hair, blond whiskers, and piercing blue eyes. He was in his mid-30s and he looked archetypically German. The man assessed Janós contemptuously, signaled his approval to the two guards and directed that they take their stations some 50 feet from the entrance to the structure.

Janós did not want to let down his guard, but he was relieved the two Ukrainians had been dismissed. He looked around the room and noticed that it contained a food preparation area, a desk and bookshelves piled high with papers, a sleeping area, a couch, an area for hanging clothes, a toilet and a shower alcove. On one of the clothes pegs, Janós observed the unmistakable uniform of an SS officer. The braided epaulets on the uniform's shoulders displayed the mark of an *SS Sturmbannführer*, a major.

The uniform unnerved Janós and once again he could feel his stomach rise. He saw no sign of torture implements or weapons, not even a sharp knife such as one used for cutting cheese or paring fruit. Janós concluded the room was neither an interrogation center nor a killing facility. Whatever the purpose of the room, thought Janós, it was outfitted in such a way as to ensure that no one who entered would have access to a weapon.

While Janós was taking in the room, he looked only indirectly at the man who stood in front of him. Deference was undoubtedly a wise tactic at such a moment. More importantly, from Janós' perspective, he had observed that the man was wearing

only a robe. Janós was afraid that if he registered acknowledgement of how the major was dressed, the man might be insulted or fly into a rage. So Janós stood in front of the major with his eyes cast down.

Janós did not have to wait long for the man to react. "So, Jew," said SS Major Felix Kohler, the deputy commandant of the camp, "how do you like our little operation here?" Pleased with what he considered to be a humorous inquiry, the man continued. "No need to reply. I am guessing that you have seen better."

Janós, still looking at the floor, only nodded.

Again, the officer addressed Janós: "Well, Jew, this is your golden opportunity to improve your lot and perhaps even remain a guest of this lovely facility for a lot longer than your fellow inmates. What do you think of that, Jew?"

Janós remained silent, still looking only at the floor.

Menacingly, Kohler now grabbed Janós by the shoulders and screamed into his face, "Jew! When I ask a question, I expect a response. Again, what do you think of the golden opportunity that is being presented to you?"

Janós was so frightened by the man's menacing tone that he could only stammer out the words, "I am pleased, Sir."

"Good," said Kohler, as he unraveled his robe displaying his protuberant member, erect with desire. "Now what do you think you have to do to earn such a golden opportunity?"

Janós felt sick. He now knew what was expected of him and was repulsed beyond measure. An array of gruesome thoughts ran through his tortured mind, but the one that prevailed above all others was that this large blond miscreant might be giving Janós an avenue for survival. Compared to shoveling the bones of the dead, what the man was requesting could be tolerated.

Expressionless, Janós took the penis into his mouth and sucked rhythmically as the major wailed with desire. After it was

over, Janós did not know what to do with the stream of liquid that had entered his mouth, so he swallowed it.

"Well done," said the major. "You may have found yourself a new job. Of course, it will be a second job because we need everyone available to dig for buried treasure during the day. Now shower, Jew. You stink."

Janós showered and then was directed to the major's bed. The sensation of sleeping on a mattress felt so good to Janós that he almost forgot about the large man whose penis he had just taken into his mouth. After a few hours of blissful sleep, Janós was reminded of his circumstances as the major rolled over and once again directed Janós to suck on his erect penis.

In the morning, Janós was given more food than he had had in months and was sent back to his barracks to join the other prisoners for a day of work. As he walked, Janós took advantage of the daylight to look around. He noticed that there were more guards, most of them Ukrainian, but few SS officers.

Eventually, Janós was marched into his barracks and told to assume his place on his bunk. It was not yet time for the inmates to get up but some were apparently awake, for, as Janós walked into the bunk, he heard snickering. Everyone knew what had happened that evening; they had seen it before. As the men began to awaken with the light, Janós could hear deprecatory whispers throughout the barracks. Janós didn't mind the scorn being heaped on him, for he no longer felt emotion in the conventional sense. All he knew was most of the men in his barracks would be dead in a matter of weeks or even days, and he did not want to be one of them.

That evening, Janós lay in his bunk after a day of backbreaking work. Once again, the two guards with the Ukrainian accents came for Janós and took him to the major's quarters. The major was occupied with paperwork and directed Janós to shower and lie naked on the bed. Soon, the major completed his work. He

casually disrobed and, as with the evening before, unceremoniously presented his stiff penis to Janós, who knew what he was expected to do.

This routine went on day after day. Each morning, as Janós returned to the prisoner's barracks, he would try to notice any changes in the operation of the compound—where the vehicles were parked, what guard towers were manned during the early hours of the day, and how many armed men were milling about. With this information in hand, Janós would eventually find himself back at the barracks, where he would be again subjected to the deriding whispers of his bunk mates.

In time, two new bedraggled souls replaced the prisoners who had occupied the bunks below Janós' bunk. Then those two men were replaced by two other prisoners. Janós assumed that the replaced men had died at their work or had been killed. He felt neither sadness nor guilt. In fact, he felt little more than the passage of time.

Janós' nocturnal visits to the major continued for some weeks. Then, he began to notice a gradual change in the behavior of the major. At first, it was almost imperceptible. But then, it began to take on more tangible form—an occasional smile when Janós arrived at night, an arm around Janós as the major cradled Janós in his sleep, or a few more scraps of food in the morning before Janós was dismissed to dig among the bones. Janós was not so numb as to fail to take notice of what was going on. He sensed that he had begun to fill some kind of void or longing in the major's life.

Janós reacted indifferently to this realization; he merely did what was asked of him. Since the major never engaged Janós in conversation, there was no need to provide any reaction to his recent kindnesses. Instead, Janós merely continued to file away whatever aspects of his otherworldly existence might prove beneficial for possible later use.

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As August approached, the whispering in the prisoner's barracks began to be more determined and more decipherable. Concluding there were more despicable issues on which to focus their contempt, the prisoners had long stopped their scoffing over Janós' nocturnal goings on. Now the murmurings of the prisoners were directed toward something much more important—the rumor that the camp had concluded its murderous business and would soon be closed.

Unspeakable though the lives of the prisoners had been, their jobs had at least provided them with life. In fact, a few of the prisoners had survived for the entire time that Janós had been in the barracks. If there was no longer a need for the *Sonderkommando* to perform their wretched duties, there would no longer be a need for their Nazi overlords to keep them alive. So at great risk to themselves, the men of the *Sonderkommando* began to whisper and plot.

Janós, too, had heard the rumors. Then, one morning as the two guards with the Ukrainian accents marched Janós back to the barracks, he heard one of them say to the other: "Well, it won't be much longer and, frankly, I can't wait. These Jews are receiving their due. But to me, the whole place is beginning to stink. I'll be delighted when the time comes to move on and find something else to do where I don't have to spend my evenings pimping for some decadent major."

"Quiet," said the other guard. "You'll be overheard." But it was too late; Janós had taken it all in.

That morning, when Janós was returned to the barracks, he thought the whispers were different. He was right. The whispers were now being passed from one inmate to another and eventually on to Janós. What was being said in the whispers at first startled Janós, for the prisoners were asking him for help.

But what kind of help did they have in mind? A few days later, a prisoner who had been in the barracks for as long as Janós man-

aged to march next to him as they headed for the burial pits. In a barely audible whisper, the prisoner, who introduced himself as Friedrich, asked Janós if the men of the barracks could trust him. This struck Janós as a peculiar request, given the treatment he had received from his fellow prisoners for almost three months.

"Why should I help you?" answered Janós, reflexively. "All that your fellow inmates and you have done for three months is heap scorn on me."

"True," said Friedrich. "It was a good pastime and deriding you helped the men keep their minds off their own worries. But in fact, they were merely calling the kettle black. They had no right to criticize you or any other human being after spending their time defiling the resting places of their departed brothers and sisters. And for what? So, they could add a few weeks or months on to their miserable existence!"

Janós frowned. But in truth, he was both flattered and intrigued at the opportunity to ingratiate himself with the men of this forgotten outpost of humanity. He merely nodded and said, "What makes you think I can be of help?"

With a palpable sigh of relief, Friedrich continued. "You've heard rumors the camp is going to close?"

"Yes," said Janós. "I heard my Ukrainian thugs talking about it the other day."

"You know," said Friedrich, "when the camp closes, we are all as good as dead. They'll have no use for us and certainly will not want us around to testify to the horrible things they have done in this place. Mark my words, no one will be spared—not even you."

Janós hesitated for a moment, but quickly resumed his pace lest the guards notice that Friedrich and he were talking. It had occurred to him that when the camp closed, the major would be gone and so would the need for the odious services that Janós

had been performing for the major's benefit. But, now he had to come to terms with the full immensity of what Friedrich was saying. "How can I help?" asked Janós, looking beseechingly at Friedrich.

"This is Monday morning. Learn all you can between now and Wednesday morning. How many guards are on duty in the morning and where they are posted? Where are vehicles parked? Are any located near the guard's entrance to the camp? Are new shipments of human cargo scheduled to arrive?"

"What then?"

"When you arrive back in the barracks Wednesday morning, whisper this information to the man who sleeps directly underneath you. He will pass along the information to me and I will pass it on to the rest of the barracks through an established whisper chain."

"What will you do with the information?"

"We are breaking out Wednesday morning. Once we subdue the guards who come for us, we will use your information to break out of the camp. The perimeter guards are getting sloppy because they know it will not be long before they leave this hellhole. We have to take advantage of their sloppiness to break out of this place."

"How will you subdue the escort guards who come for us?"

"Ah, my dear Janós!" exclaimed Friedrich in a whisper filled with irony. "That is also where you come in. You must figure out how to bring a weapon with you."

"But," stammered Janós, "there are no weapons in the major's quarters, not even a kitchen knife. He knows that someone like me could attack him if such a weapon were present. Even if such a weapon were accessible, there are two Ukrainian thugs posted no more than fifty feet from his quarters.

Friedrich looked at Janós with impatience. "We don't need a machine gun—just an implement that can be used to overcome

the guards. The major must feed you in the morning. Do you eat with a fork?"

"The major uses a fork, but I don't know where he stows it."

"You have your assignment," said Friedrich dismissively. "The prisoners in the other barracks are planning on disturbances Wednesday morning and there is a plan to break into the armory, so there may be confusion in the camp that could give you cover."

"Thanks," said Janós. "Thanks for this opportunity to redeem myself."

Friedrich stopped just long enough to make sure he had Janós' attention. "We are all victims here. There is no such thing as redemption; only survival. If you and I were to escape and one day find one another, I would be proud to invite you to my dinner table and treat you with the respect anyone who has experienced this hell hole deserves. Do I make myself clear?"

Janós smiled, his mind racing with thoughts of how he might be able to help.

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That evening and the following evening, Janós slept restlessly by the side of the major. Janós had done his best not to betray his excitement and anticipation, and had also managed to ease the major into a satisfied sleep on both nights. On Wednesday morning, the major had gotten up early, dressed with the exception of his uniform jacket and begun preparing breakfast for himself. He had placed a glass of milk and a plate of black bread on the table and was piling cheese high on the chunks of bread. All of a sudden, there was shouting outside and a loud banging on the door of the major's quarters.

Angrily, the major opened the door to see what was going on. The two guards with the Ukrainian accents stood in front of the door and Janós heard them say there were disturbances in the *Sonderkommando* barracks. The major rushed back into the room

without looking at Janós and grabbed his uniform jacket. As he hurriedly swung the jacket over his shoulder, one of the sleeves caught the glass and plate that had been on the table and both went crashing to the floor.

Irritated at his clumsiness, the major barked at to the two guards. "Let the Jew clean up the mess. One of you, come with me. The other, stay with the Jew and take him back to the barracks after he cleans up."

Submissively, Janós immediately got on his hands and knees and started cleaning up, using the major's breakfast napkin. It was then that Janós saw his opportunity. He noticed a large piece of broken glass that had found a resting place under the table. Janós left it for last.

As Janós worked, the guard was getting noticeably agitated at the sounds that were coming from the barracks. He urged Janós to hurry. "The major doesn't eat his food off the floor. Save your strength for the bone piles."

Janós nodded his assent. He made a flourish of one last task and, as the guard impatiently looked out the window, he wrapped the large shard of glass in the napkin and hid both under his sleeve. As he walked back to the barracks with the guard, his heart beat so hard that he was afraid the guard would hear it and sense that something was afoot. The guard jabbed Janós, urging him to continue quickly toward the barracks. Janós complied, but each time the guard looked in the direction of the disturbance, Janós' head bobbed from side to side as he took in as much as he could of the camp's security emplacements.

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When Janós arrived back at the barracks, many of the prisoners, including a man named Gershon, who occupied the bunk below him, had already awakened because of the noise from the disturbances. However, the two guards who customarily escorted the prisoners to their workstations had not yet made an

appearance. Janós was surprised, but assumed the guards had been diverted to wherever the commotion was taking place.

Janós took advantage of the opportunity and leaned down to whisper what he had learned to Gershon: "There are not many guards between here and the gate—maybe a half dozen or so. The tower at the gate is occupied by two guards and is equipped with a machine gun. Most of the trucks on this side of the camp are parked near the gate and could be used to pursue prisoners who try to escape."

"Thank you, my friend," said Gershon. "We know how to dismantle the trucks, but the machine gun is going to be a problem. Were you able to smuggle out a weapon?"

"Yes," said Janós, unveiling the shard of glass.

"Good," said Gershon. "I will pass this information along to the others. The guards should be here soon. We may not go out today because of the disturbances that have already begun. But when the guards do come in, you must use your weapon to disable one of them. The other guard will no doubt be surprised and hopefully will react carelessly. That's when we will take care of him. Are you up to the task?"

"I have killed before!"

Gershon appraised Janós critically, and then smiled. "Then be on your guard, and may God watch over you and the other prisoners."

Janós didn't think God had ever heard of Treblinka, with all of the cruelty it evoked. He would rely on himself, even if God were watching.

In a few minutes, the two guards who customarily took the prisoners to their workstations came storming into the barracks. "Everyone stay in your places," screamed the lead guard. Some of your fellow prisoners are foolishly attempting to storm the armory. They will be caught and executed. In the meantime, we wish to make sure that all of you who are supposed to be here are in your places."

The guard who had spoken walked up and down the aisles of bunks, counting the prisoners as he conducted his inspection. The other guard was making a show of his disgust, cracking open the head of a prisoner who had voiced a mild reaction to the news about the armory.

When the lead guard started walking down Janós' aisle, Janós carefully wrapped the shard of glass in the napkin to form a glass version of knife blade and haft. As the guard approached Janós' bunk, Janós thought about the soldier who had killed his friend Manny in Warsaw and whom, in turn, he had killed.

Wondering if he could kill again, Janós quickly willed himself away from his ruminations and returned to the present. Just as the guard was approaching Janós' bunk and Janós was deciding how he was going to attack, Gershon swore loudly at the guard. The tense guard prepared to slam the butt of his rifle on the head of the impudent Jew who had the temerity to insult him. As the guard focused on his intended victim, Janós jumped on him and buried the shard deeply into the flesh below the man's clavicle. The thrust wasn't enough to kill the guard who screamed in pain, but it disabled him. In a flash, Gershon was on the guard, killing him with the very rifle butt that the guard had intended to use on him.

At the other end of the barracks, the second guard had come running at the sound of the screams from the first guard. In so doing, he unwisely exposed his back to the bunks that he passed. Four of the prisoners jumped the guard and, with relish, smashed in the face of the man who had made their lives a living hell. Gershon and another prisoner gathered up the rifles and ammunition belts of the two guards.

By now, all was pandemonium in the barracks. It was now time for Friedrich to take the lead. He knew everything depended on haste. Quickly, he ran from the back of the bunk and screamed at the prisoners to be quiet. They accepted his position of lead-

ership and quieted down. "Here's what is happening. Other prisoners are trying to overtake the armory. That is not our business for the time being. Instead, we are going to make a run for the gate. Some of you I know are familiar with automobile mechanics. As we pass any vehicles that could be used to pursue us, I want you men to disable the vehicles by lifting the hoods and pulling out the distributor caps. We have two rifles. I will carry one and Gershon will carry the other. We are both good marksmen but, like all of you, we are weak. In addition, we believe there is a machine gun in the guard tower. Gershon and I will do our best to take out the machine gunner but once we reach the gate, it is every man for himself. When the camp is subdued, we will regroup. Do I make myself clear? Raise your right hand if you understand."

Every man in the room raised his right hand.

"Good," said Gershon. "Now let's get out of here as free men."

*****

Gershon opened the door of the barracks and the men—if the skeletons that emerged could be called men—poured out quietly. Soon, several hundred prisoners from other nearby barracks joined the men from Janós' barracks. The camp was up in arms by then. The prisoner insurrection had caught the camp by surprise and most of the guards were trying to prevent other prisoners from gaining access to the armory. So, the ragtag men from Janós' barracks were able to make their way toward the gate with relatively little resistance.

As the escapees came in contact with parked cars and trucks, a few men broke ranks and disabled the vehicles. As the men were nearing the gate, a man known as Tadeusz yelled out that he had found a key in the ignition of one of the trucks he had been sent to disable. Men piled onto the truck, Janós being one of them. Tadeusz got behind the wheel and waited impatiently as dozens of men sought refuge on the vehicle. When the truck

could not hold a single additional prisoner, Tadeusz headed for the gate.

The guard who occupied the tower near the gate was stunned to see a large transport truck heading toward the gate at high speed. When he realized what was happening, he began to rain down bullets on the fast approaching truck. Men fell from the truck, grievously wounded, but Tadeusz continued to head for the gate. The gate gave way under the force of the truck and Tadeusz accelerated. The truck lurched forward for all it was worth. Behind him, hordes of prisoners braved the fire from the guard tower and poured through the gate.

The area around the camp was surprisingly bucolic. Only one road led from the camp through the countryside. Tadeusz chose not to stay on the road out of fear the truck would be overtaken by faster pursuing vehicles. He left the road and headed in the direction of a forested area and drove until the truck could go no longer navigate the rolling terrain.

Janós and the other men on the truck jumped out. As they ran toward the forest, they could see other prisoners pouring through the gate on foot. Then, they saw two vehicles manned by guards screech through the gate. The guards in the pursuing trucks took aim at the escaping prisoners who had breached the gate on foot, but their principal interest was the men who had occupied the now abandoned truck.

Instinctively, Janós understood his dilemma. The guards driving the pursuit vehicles evidently had concluded they could easily pick off the prisoners who had escaped on foot, but the men who had escaped in the truck with Tadeusz posed the greatest danger of getting away. The pursuing vehicles focused on the truck's occupants who were now ahead of the rest of the escapees and heading for the forested area.

Janós and his compatriots decided to divide into two groups of about a dozen men each. Janós' group headed toward the right

and the other group headed to the left. Once they reached the wooded area, the men found the going difficult, particularly in light of their severely weakened condition.

Janós heard gunshots and men screaming. The sound of gunfire got closer and more screams could be heard. Janós, being the heartiest in his group, had led the way. After a few moments, only two other men had been able to keep up with Janós and the screams of the others could be heard as Janós and his two compatriots ran for all they were worth.

The three fugitives came to a clearing where the going was easier, but there was no longer any protection from the trees. Janós began to feel uneasy and, as he ran, looked for a place where he would again be sheltered by the trees.

All of a sudden, a man burst into the clearing and shouted to someone behind him, "I found three of the prisoners!" In a moment, the other man appeared. Janós was stunned, for he recognized the other man as the major.

The major was armed and within shooting range. He immediately realized Janós was one of the three fugitives in his sights. He shot over the three men; Janós and the other two froze. Turning to his compatriot, the major shouted, "I'll take care of these three. You look for the others."

The other man left, leaving the major with his gun leveled at the three exhausted escapees who were only a few meters away and frozen in their tracks with dread of what awaited them. His rifle raised, the major walked up to Janós and the other two men. The major then withdrew a pistol from his holster and directed the three men to face him.

The two emaciated men standing next to Janós knew the end had arrived. Deliberately, the major raised his pistol to shoulder level and shot the first man in the face. Blood splattered as the major leveled his pistol at the second man's face and shot again.

Janós knew what awaited him, but was not as resigned as the first two men had been. He began to speak, but the major held up his hand, aimed the pistol at Janós' face and then, without shooting, turned around and walked away. As he receded with his back to Janós, the major released a third shot into the air.

Stunned, Janós turned in the direction of the major. Not knowing what impulse was driving him, he picked up a large rock. With the stealth he had employed during his days in the sewer, he quietly sped after the retreating major.

The major heard Janós, but not soon enough. As the major turned around, Janós brought the rock down on his head. The major released an involuntary gasp and fell to the ground. Janós observed the major's agony for a moment until he reminded himself he was still a fugitive. Rock still in hand, Janós knelt over the major whose eyes were open and whose mouth was trying to utter a plaintive plea for mercy. Janós watched, feeling nothing. Then he smashed the rock into the major's face.

Chapter 14
Escape to Sweden
August–October 1943

By 1940, the Kreislers were well integrated in Denmark following a relatively uneventful transition. Lorenz's work was satisfying and suited his skills. Agatha had been accepted into the social fabric of the Jewish community. Sarah had continued dancing, and Werner had made friends.

In April of that year, Hitler invaded the country, sending shock waves throughout Danish society. However, for the next three years, the Nazi occupation of Denmark was without ruthlessness. The Nazis used their benignity toward the Danes as a propaganda tool for broadcasting what Europe would one day look like under Nazi rule. The presence of a *Reich Bevöllmachtigter*, a plenipotentiary from the Reich diplomatic corps, and the *Wermacht*, the Nazi armed forces, made sure Hitler's interests were properly served in the occupied country. Otherwise, it was business as usual: King Christian X of Denmark retained his rule; the *Rigsdag*, the Danish Parliament, continued to function; and the police and judiciary operated under Danish control.

The Nazis pressed for the release of Denmark's 7,800 Jews. The Danish people and their government resisted handing them over, but concessions were required in exchange for German restraint in the face of such resistance. With the *Wermacht* ready to pounce at any minute, these concessions—disarmament, provisioning the German occupiers with food and raw materials, and disassociating from the Allies—reflected no more than the reality of the Danish occupation.

Every day, word leaked into the country of the atrocities being committed against the Jews of other occupied countries by the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* commandos and by the regular army. The Kreislers, as with other members of the Danish Jewish community, went about their business with a wary sense of apprehension.

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The importance of Arno Bernthe's work in obtaining Swedish steel for the German war effort was well known to the Office of the *Bevöllmachtigter*. Within the *Bevöllmachtigter*, Bernthe became friends with Georg Duckwitz, the maritime attaché. Duckwitz was also an international trader, with coffee as his area of interest.

Duckwitz took an immediate liking to Bernthe, expressing admiration for the impressive work he had performed on behalf of the *Reich*. Bernthe had several reasons for encouraging the friendship, one of which was to advance Lorenz's interests by urging that he be allowed to remain in Denmark. Bernthe was prepared to impress upon Duckwitz how Lorenz had served with distinction during the First World War. To Bernthe's surprise, Duckwitz received the request sympathetically and agreed to make the information known to the appropriate parties. Duckwitz's efforts must have succeeded, for Lorenz had been able to remain in Copenhagen free of Nazi interference or worse, conscription.

Lorenz's status as a gentile, a professional engineer and a refugee from Nazi Germany made it possible for him to penetrate social circles that otherwise would have been cut off to him had he been Jewish. So Sarah and Werner had been permitted to attend some of Copenhagen's finer schools, and eventually Sarah had been able to matriculate at the University of Copenhagen as a dance major. Only Agatha was confined to the Jewish community, but her many friends made life in Copenhagen tolerable, and her volunteer work on behalf of impoverished elements of the Danish Jewish community provided for a rewarding existence.

Universities are like great vessels waiting to receive society's constituent parts. In this vein, Sarah found herself part of an eclectic academic stew. She had Jewish friends, which was to be expected. Because she became curious about Danish politics, she also sought out friends who were student members of the Danish Social Democratic Party. One of these students was Hilde Hedtoft, a statuesque young woman who was studying politics and social systems. Though pursuing different interests, Sarah and Hilde became fast friends and attended youth functions sponsored by the Social Democratic Party.

Surprisingly, Hilde seemed to know many of the older party members at these functions. Sarah took it in stride, assuming Copenhagen was a tight knit community for those, like Hilde, who had lived there all of their lives. Only when Hilde invited Sarah to her home did she discover that Hilde was the daughter of Hans Hedtoft, the chairman of the Danish Social Democratic Party.

At first, Hedtoft had been tepid about the idea of Hilde bringing a Jew home. The Nazis gave him enough to worry about without a Jew entering into the equation. But Hilde had prevailed on her father and the introduction of Sarah had been a success. In fact, the elder Hedtoft had taken a liking to his daughter's friend.

Hedtoft was a ballet *aficionado*. Before the war, Hedtoft and his wife Kirsten had attended the Royale Danish Ballet with regularity. He loved hearing from Sarah about the Danish Ballet's history, especially saucy stories about its greatest ballet master, August Bournonville, who had staged almost 50 ballets from 1830 to 1877. On several occasions, Sarah, with Hilde as her partner, parodied movements from Bournonville's balletic creations. Hilde leapt, Sarah pirouetted and Hedtoft clapped.

In this way, the life of the Kreisler family proceeded apace under the fragile *detente* that existed between the Danes and their German overseers. But in early 1943, the tolerance of the

occupiers faded. The calm had always been brittle, with small fissures having the potential to become huge cracks. These cracks began to spread as the Danish Resistance, emboldened by German setbacks in North Africa and Stalingrad, stepped up its attacks against the country's German occupiers. In the *Folketing* election in March 1943, the Danish electorate delivered a stunning blow to the Nazis. The four traditional Danish parties received 95% of the vote. The pro-Nazi National Socialists received less than 2% of the vote. Strikes and civil disobedience followed the election and the Nazi ire reached a breaking point. On August 29, the *Rigsdag* was dissolved and martial law was imposed on Denmark.

The fate of Denmark's Jews was at a crossroads. Without an accommodation between the Danish government and the Nazis, the Jews of the country were in danger of losing their protectors. This realization swept through the country like wildfire, and men and women, gentile and Jewish, rushed to act.

George Duckwitz, who had shown such inexplicable sympathy for Lorenz Kreisler's well-being, was now given an opportunity to demonstrate how sympathetic he really was to the overall Jewish cause. At great personal risk, Duckwitz flew to Sweden, ostensibly on *Reich* business, and privately pleaded with Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson for Sweden to grant asylum to Denmark's Jews. No public statement was issued but in private, the Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry gave authority to its ambassador in Copenhagen to issue passports to all of Denmark's Jews.

Duckwitz's overtures to Sweden were echoed by the entreaties of Neils Bohr, the great Danish scientist of Jewish descent who had won the 1922 Nobel Prize in physics and was a hero throughout Scandinavia. Bohr had just escaped to Sweden from Denmark after learning the Nazis intended to pursue him as a Jew. Once in Sweden, Bohr plead the case for Jewish asylum to King Gustav V and the Swedish people. After all, argued Bohr, hadn't Sweden earlier

opened its borders to Norway's small population of Jews? Surely the same humanitarian instincts that led to the rescue of Norway's Jews must also apply in this, the greatest time of need for Denmark's considerably larger Jewish community.

While Bohr was pleading his case in Sweden, Sarah was at Hilde's house. The talk was about the Nazi crackdown and how it would affect the girls' studies at the university. Suddenly, the elder Hedtoft burst into the room, excited and flushed. With not even a greeting to his family, Hedtoft addressed Sarah directly. "Sarah, you must go to your family immediately. I have just come from a meeting with Georg Duckwitz, the German maritime attaché. He had just met with *Reich Bevöllmachtigter*, Werner Best. Duckwitz disclosed to me that the Germans are planning on deporting all of Denmark's Jews to the camps. You know what that means! You must tell your father. I will do my best to get word to the Danish Resistance Movement and to Carl Henriques, the head of the Jewish community."

"But, tomorrow is the day before *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year and a holy day within the Jewish community."

"Sarah, it matters not. I don't know much about your holiday, but I do know that the first order of business for any religion is the sanctity and preservation of life. You must go home and your father must spread the word that all of you must leave. I have asked my colleagues to contact the Swedish ambassador. Although there has been no official statement from Sweden, we believe an announcement will be made soon in which Sweden will grant asylum to all of Denmark's Jews. You must hurry."

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The announcement from Sweden granting asylum to Denmark's Jews came three days later, on October 2. Duckwitz and Bohr had succeeded. During the intervening three days, Lorenz and other members of the Jewish community and the Danish Resistance worked feverishly to prepare Denmark's entire Jewish

community for a massive exodus by sea. The planned route was from Zealand, Denmark's most populous island, to the Swedish coastal area of Scania, a mere six kilometers across the waters of the Øresund—one of the three straits connecting the Baltic Sea to the North Sea.

On the days following October 2, the harbors and port villages that populated the northern coast of Zealand became an intensely busy network with one objective—the rescue of Denmark's Jews by transporting them to the safety of Scania. Around the clock, Denmark's Jews poured into Zealand's seaside ports, hoping to obtain passage across the waters of the Øresund to safety in the Scanian harbor of Helsingborg. The Jews came during the day and night. They had been told to keep their possessions to a minimum and they had complied. Some carried belongings; others carried only their children.

When they arrived on the coast, this stream of Jewish humanity—many of whom could trace their ancestry in Denmark back almost two centuries—found all manner of craft waiting for them, including well-equipped fishing boats, small craft and recreational sailboats. Many of the refugees had never been to sea, but off they went, placing their trust in the hands of the Danish underground and the Danish boatmen who were now risking their lives to come to the rescue of this otherwise condemned community.

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An operation such as the one that was unfolding on Denmark's Zealand coast required coordination and leadership. Here, Lorenz excelled. Calling upon the survival and organizational skills that had allowed him to become a decorated war hero, Lorenz took charge of the northern and western most part of the island—the part most difficult to reach from Copenhagen, but also the region offering the fastest access to the waiting boats.

Lorenz encouraged his family to board the first craft available and assured them he would not be far behind. But Agatha knew

her husband and understood all too well that he would not leave until he had facilitated the escape of as many Jews as there were available craft to carry them. So, on this one rare occasion, she disobeyed him. She, Sarah and Werner remained to assist other refugees who needed help in getting onto the waiting craft.

On the second day of the evacuation, Sarah was delighted that Hilde came to assist with the boatlift. Sarah didn't know how Hilde had found them but there she was—comforting children, escorting the elderly, distributing food, and tending to those too feeble to walk under their own power.

At length, the number of craft began to dwindle and Agatha persuaded Lorenz it was time for them to go. It was getting dark, but the family could see a small two-sailed pleasure craft that was anchored not far from shore and waiting to pick up passengers. As the Kreislers waded into the water looking forward to being brought on board by the skipper of the craft, they heard gunfire in the distance. Then, the sound became louder and Lorenz could see the splash of bullets hitting the water around him.

Hilde had remained on the shore waiving and wiping tears from her eyes, as the Kreisler family began moving into the water toward the pleasure craft. The gunfire caught her by surprise. All of a sudden, she fell in the water, pierced by a bullet that entered her arm. Lorenz saw what happened and had to decide what to do. He couldn't abandon his family. But then again, he couldn't abandon Hilde who might be seriously wounded and who would not fare well if found by the Nazis. In a moment of impulsive decision-making, Lorenz reversed his course, headed for the shore and scooped up the stricken Hilde. Meanwhile, Agatha, who had boarded the craft with her two children, tried to quell her rising hysteria and persuade the uneasy captain of the sailboat to wait.

To his great credit, the captain did wait and helped Lorenz as he pushed Hilde on to the stern of the boat. Then Lorenz climbed on to the boat's gunwale, the captain revved up the small, two-

stroke outboard motor and guided the craft into the strait. As they left the hail of bullets further and further behind, the captain, a blond bearded man of about 45, assured his cargo of refugees that they would be in Scania in no time. Just as he was offering these words of assurance, however, the sea became turbulent and large ugly waves lashed at the boat.

The captain had plied the waters of the strait for many years and knew the currents could be unpredictable owing to its narrowness and the difference in salinity between the Baltic and the North Seas. At the helm, he was in a position to ride with the waves. Not so with his land-loving cargo. Lorenz was uncomfortable, but Agatha and Werner became incapacitated by the motion of the boat and became sea sick. Only Sarah was able to ride out the cork-screwing waves and tend to Hilde.

Once accustomed to the boat's motion, Lorenz took off his outer garment and tore the shirt he was wearing into a combination bandage and tourniquet for Hilde. The bandage had staunched the flow of blood from Hilde's arm for a while, but the turbulence reopened the wound and Hilde, who was now in Sarah's arms, began bleeding again.

The captain was doing all he could to control the craft amidst the ravaging seas, but he was concerned. He kept his motor on because the gusting wind would permit him to use only one of his two sails. He worried about having enough fuel. But luck was with him and his boat. All of a sudden, he and Sarah spotted the lights of Scania in the distance.

Frenzied voices from people on the shore could be heard, and soon a dinghy was motoring toward the sailboat. Lorenz and Sarah lifted Hilde onto the dinghy. Even in the moonlight, Hilde's skin looked alarmingly pale and Lorenz urged the boatmen to get her to safety before rescuing his family. The boatmen complied, and the family waited for an agonizing hour before they saw two men rowing a skiff toward their boat.

Lorenz asked the captain how he could pay him, but the captain demurred. Overcome with gratitude for the man and what he done, Lorenz hugged the captain and then helped lower his family on to the skiff.

On shore, the family found the temporary medical facility that had been set up for the refugees. There they found Hilde, wan but alert, being tended by a nurse. The nurse said that Hilde would be okay and that a boatman who was returning to Denmark had been instructed to get word to her father.

Two days later, Hans Hedtoft made the trip across the strait to see his daughter, who was recovering from surgery to remove the bullet from her arm. Lorenz had heard of the elder Hedtoft's arrival. He came to Hilde's bedside to visit her and to thank the politician for what the Danes had done for their Jewish population. There, he found father and daughter talking gently, the former relieved and the latter smiling.

Lorenz approached Hedtoft and bowed reverentially as he gave voice to what he was feeling: "What you have done for the Jews of Denmark will go down as one of the great episodes of both Jewish and European history. I only wish it had not been at the expense of the injury to Hilde's arm."

Hedtoft reluctantly looked away from his daughter so that he could gaze into the eyes of his fellow father. "We have had little opportunity to repay the Nazis for the atrocities they've committed all over Europe. You may think that what we've done is noteworthy, but, for us, it was duty. And to tell the truth, it was quite satisfying. As for Hilde, I believe that, had the tables been turned, Sarah would have responded in the same manner. By the way, my confederates have informed me that of Denmark's 7,800 Jews, as many as 7,300 made it safely across the Øresund to Swedish soil. You will be able to tell that to your grandchildren."

Chapter 15
From Sicily to the Italian Mainland
July 1943–June 1944

On July 22, 1943, the Sicilian capital city of Palermo in the northwest part of the island surrendered to Patton's 7th Army. Patton's goal was now the city of Messina to the east. Pincer-like, the British 8th Army was also pushing toward Messina. Their course would also take them north, but along the eastern coast of Sicily. Patton wanted to arrive first.

Three amphibious landings had been required before Messina fell to Patton's forces. His Third Infantry Division was struck particularly hard. Now supporting Patton's troops, Jonathan's 95th Hospital Unit was working frantically to keep up with the Third's casualties. Every day, the physicians and nurses of the 95th worked round the clock to close wounds, set bones and, where no other course was available, amputate. Jonathan changed the dressings on these wounded men, altered their bed positions, started them on the arduous task of rehabilitation, and sought to answer questions and allay anxieties. The work was unrelenting and emotionally draining but Jonathan worked with passion and care, as if called upon to do so by some higher order.

By August 16, Patton had taken Messina. The city's German defenders were in retreat to the mainland. The cost had been high, with Patton's Army having sustained 7,500 casualties. Now the formidable task of invading the Italian mainland was about to begin. However, the invasion would have to take place without Patton, whose alarming tendency to browbeat his own troops had resulted in his loss of command.

On September 5th, the 95th disembarked at Paestum, Italy. It was the first American field hospital to plant its stakes on the European mainland. Four days later, the invasion of Italy began. Naples was the strategic objective of the invasion, but the Allied planes based in Sicily lacked the flying range to reach the Gulf of Naples, so Salerno—a gulf 50 miles south of Naples—became the landing site.

On the morning of September 9, 165,000 infantrymen from the Fifth Army, under the command of General Mark W. Clark, and their counterparts in the British 8th disembarked from 450 ships and made for the Italian coastline off Salerno. To maximize the element of surprise, the invasion was without air cover. Operation Avalanche was underway.

At first, the invading forces encountered light resistance. However, the American infantry divisions were widely dispersed along 35 miles of the Italian shoreline. Opposite the thin ranks of the Americans were six entrenched German divisions.

The 95th, along with its sister unit, the 16th Evacuation Hospital, had disembarked with 100 tons of medical equipment and 200 tons of hospital equipment, including beds and tents. Within three days, the enlisted men of the 95th had 250 ward beds in operation. But with all of the preparations, the 95th could not have anticipated the waves of injured infantrymen who required attention during the prolonged battle that was taking place.

The ward beds filled up so rapidly with wounded soldiers that many had to be left on folding cots. When the cots quickly ran out, wool blankets doubled over were placed on the ground for patients. When the ward tents filled, men were laid on the ground outside of the tents with only their heads inside the tent walls. Even then, dozens of wounded men had to sleep outside, exposed to the elements.

Throughout this time, the 95th's medical personnel worked tirelessly. Surgical teams performed their lifesaving work with

little rest. Enlisted men did all they could to move the patients to medically safe quarters as quickly as possible. And men like Jonathan attended to their patients' comfort, surgical dressings, and rehabilitation needs.

Jonathan averaged about three hours of sleep a night and, at times, walked around in a daze. All around him, men were moaning in pain, many in agony, some in the throes of death. Some days, the smells and the desperate sounds coming from Jonathan's patients were almost more than he could take. But he recognized that his work had to be done and each time his spirits began to flag, he caught himself and redoubled his efforts.

The surgical crew was remarkable in the number of injured servicemen it was able to save. But patients died—some of them while they were in Jonathan's care, recovering from surgery. With each patient fatality, Jonathan's contempt for the enemy mounted and his desire to do more took over his thoughts. He felt the pull of combat and the need to be with the gritty fighting men of the Fifth Army—to help them when they fell. Being behind the lines was no longer what drove Jonathan. He had to be side by side on the field of battle with his uncommonly brave comrades. But, for the present, he worked tirelessly and compassionately, giving aid wherever he could and lifting spirits whenever his own weariness permitted.

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In the month that followed, the 5th US Army and the 8th British Army were successful in moving the defending German forces northward into the interior of the country. By October 1, Naples had been taken. By October 11, a 120-mile Allied defensive line had been established across the Italian Peninsula to the Adriatic. Then, two days later, on October 13, Italy reentered the war on the Allied side, under the veteran general Pietro Badoglio. The Allied forces in Italy were elated. Their focus was now on the liberation of Rome. But what lay ahead would test the best of

them. Before them sprawled the Liri River Valley with its exposed and winding roads and, most fearsome of all, the heavily defended German *Gustav Line* near the hulking monastery at Monte Cassino.

The task of taking Monte Cassino had been assigned to the 2nd Corps of Clark's Fifth Army. However, the terrain, the winter rains and the commanding position of the Germans at Monte Cassino hampered the 2nd Corps at every leg of the mission. By the end of the year, the 2nd Corps had suffered heavy losses and was not moving.

With the 2nd Corps bogged down in the Liri Valley, Clark assigned his 6th Corps, under General John P. Lucas, to make an amphibious landing further north on the Italian Mediterranean coast at Anzio. From there, Clark planned on mounting a flanking attack on the entrenched German forces at Monte Cassino, hoping to cut off the Nazi's supply lines.

Jonathan and the men of the 95th Evacuation Hospital had been stationed along the Italian coast, first at Capua and then at Caserta. With the new battle plan in place during the first week of January 1944, the 95th again started taking down their ward tents and transferring patients to other evacuation hospitals. On January 17, the entire 95th boarded landing ship LST #163 and headed further north along the Italian coast. On board ship, Jonathan and his compatriots had a chance to rest, but few were able to relax. They knew they would be joining up with Lucas' forces and that a major amphibious landing, codenamed Operation Shingle, was about to take place. As they wondered where they would land and when they would disembark, they thought about the ensuing battle and knew they would need every ounce of luck available to get through each day.

Four days later, Lucas' forces made their landing at Anzio. The landing had caught the Germans off guard and was going well. Instead of pressing his advantage, Lucas—the *Foxy*

Grandpa, as he was known—delayed breaking into the mainland until he had adequate reserves in place. Lucas' decision was costly. Not only did it cost him his command, but it gave the German forces time to mobilize a defending army of six divisions and mount a counter attack. The German attack ravaged the Anzio beachhead, with Allied infantrymen gunned down in fearsome numbers.

Into this inferno, the 95th arrived on January 23 and immediately began to set up the unit's field hospital. From the start, the hospital was hampered by errant artillery shells and was forced to move its operations. In addition, the Germans had gained control of the area surrounding the beachhead. So, evacuation by sea was becoming difficult. The result was that the hospital's ward tents were even more overcrowded than they had been at Salerno. Shrapnel from exploding mortar shells was a constant source of concern.

With grim determination, the 95th carried out its mission. By January 31, the hospital had conducted almost 500 surgeries and treated almost 300 additional servicemen. But the constant barrage of enemy mortar fire and the physical demands of moving to safer ground took its toll on the men and women of the 95th.

During the late afternoon hours of February 7, the hospital was decimated. Jonathan had been taking a break and looked up at the darkening sky to see two British Spitfires pursuing a German bomber. Jonathan watched with fascination as the German plane did its best to evade its pursuers. All of a sudden, to lighten its load, the German plane opened its bomb doors and dropped its ordnance on the unsuspecting hospital below. Jonathan saw the bombs being released. He screamed and rolled under a nearby truck. The five anti-personnel bombs hit the overcrowded hospital with a furious thunderclap. When it was over and the screaming had subsided, Jonathan and his fellow survivors found

themselves tending to their own. In all, the bombing had killed 28 medical personnel and wounded 60 more.

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The 95th had been ravaged, but it continued to treat patients until it was replaced three days later by the 15th Evacuation Hospital, which had been stationed in the safer Italian region of Riardo. The remaining elements of the 95th were then transported to Riardo, where the hospital was to receive additional personnel and reorganize.

Riardo was a place of temporary respite for Jonathan and his fellow hospital workers, but the memories of the errant aerial bombardment ate away at Jonathan. He could no longer sit still. He had had his fill of waiting for the maimed and wounded to arrive after battle. He was determined to head for the front. So while the hospital unit was being reconstituted, he asked for permission to be assigned to a front-line battle station as a medic. To his satisfaction, his request was granted.

Two days later, Jonathan found himself in the Liri Valley with one of the combat battalions assigned to Mark Clark's 34th Infantry Division. The 34th was now near Monte Cassino and its abbey overlooking the city. The abbey was heavily defended by the German 1st Parachute Division, which had the advantage of looking down on the valley from the abbey's high ground. In addition, winter flooding in the valley had all but assured that the 34th's heavy equipment would encounter forbidding terrain in any offensive.

Nevertheless, the battle was joined on January 24. By the time Jonathan arrived on February 9, the 34th had suffered an enormous number of casualties. Even so, the Allied effort continued for three more days before the decision was made to withdraw and regroup. During that time, Jonathan experienced his first duties as a field medic. He had never worked so hard, taking time out to sleep for an hour or two whenever he could find anyplace

warm and dry. The sight of the 34th's wounded filled Jonathan with great sadness. As in the past, he was aghast at the number of men who succumbed because of the onset of infection or gangrene during the time between battlefield injury and treatment.

But Jonathan had asked to be assigned to the task and he willed himself to move from wounded soldier to wounded soldier. Each time, as his heart sank at the sight of a mortally wounded comrade, he collected his thoughts and redoubled his efforts to find soldiers who could be saved. The search was not difficult, for the wounded were plentiful.

For two days, Jonathan and his fellow medics patched injuries, applied tourniquets, set wounded limbs and manned evacuation stretchers. On the last day of the battle, as night was beginning to fall, Jonathan and one of his fellow medics came to a clearing near a vertical rock outcropping. There they found the lifeless bodies of six Germans and four Americans. It was clear a deadly firefight had occurred. On further investigation, they found a wounded American soldier who was bleeding despite a tourniquet that had been applied to him. The soldier was intermittently conscious. The two medics attended to the wounded soldier and loaded him on a battlefield stretcher for transport back to the closest aid station.

Suddenly, the soldier regained consciousness and began motioning excitedly to a nearby bush. Neither Jonathan nor his fellow medic was armed. They became concerned that the soldier was identifying a threat and possibly pointing to an armed German soldier. Jonathan's senses were on full alert. If it was a German, Jonathan prayed that the enemy soldier was wounded and that his wounds were the reason why he was in hiding and had made no effort to attack.

Jonathan motioned to the other medic for each of them to circle the bush. It was getting progressively darker, so the cover of night was to their advantage. Carefully, the two medics inched

their way around either side of the bush. There, they found an unarmed and wounded German medic. His leg had been badly wounded and he was clearly in pain. He had apparently dressed his own wound, but was unable to walk or even crawl.

Jonathan approached the wounded medic and noticed that the dressing he had applied to his own injury was the same as the dressing used on the wounded American. Jonathan pointed this out to the other medic and tended to the wounded German. However, the other medic gently put his arm on Jonathan's shoulder and pulled him off the German. Jonathan began to protest, but the other medic pointed to the stricken American who was clearly in great pain and then pointed to the darkening sky overhead.

Together, the two medics carried the wounded American soldier back to the aid station. Though it was now night, the flash of gunfire could still be seen as both sides were trying to create the most damage. The path back to the platoon aid station was longer than Jonathan had recalled and it wasn't long before his shoulders began to tire. But fear, the onset of the cold night and the need to get the wounded soldier to safety propelled Jonathan and the other medic. Finally, they reached the way station and collapsed as they unloaded their wounded charge.

A while later, Jonathan awoke. The aid station was still busy tending to the wounded. The man he had brought in was already on his way to the evacuation hospital. Jonathan rubbed his eyes and began to collect his thoughts. Suddenly, he remembered the wounded German medic. Yes, he was the enemy; but clearly, he had helped one of Jonathan's own. Jonathan could not get the wounded German out of his mind. The fact that there was a full moon overhead and that Jonathan could see the rock outcropping where they had left the German made matters even worse.

The night was cold, but not frigid. The shooting had stopped and quiet appeared to have set in. The battle was now halted and there was no reason, thought Jonathan, why he should not roll

over and return to his sleep. And yet, there was every reason. There was a wounded man out there who needed help, and Jonathan had been trained to help.

Jonathan filled his canteen, reported to the corporal in charge and told him that a wounded soldier was still out in the field. The corporal assumed Jonathan meant a wounded American soldier. Nevertheless, he encouraged Jonathan to remain at the aid station until morning. When Jonathan insisted that he had to go out immediately, the corporal did not resist.

Jonathan found the wounded German medic where he had left him. The man was still alive and conscious. Jonathan pointed to his own Red Cross insignia and then, in German, told the wounded man he was going to bring him to the American encampment for help. At first, the man resisted. But as he looked at his wounded leg, he gave in. Together, the two of them trudged back to the aid station, with the German medic putting his arm around Jonathan's shoulder and hopping on his good leg.

The going was slow. They had to stop every 20 or 30 feet, each time with fearful anticipation. Both men—rescuer and rescued—were exhausted, but they continued. Finally, they arrived at the aid station, to the collective astonishment of the corporal and the other workers. "What the hell am I supposed to do with this *Kraut*?" screamed the startled corporal.

"Why, I was hoping we would fix him up," said Jonathan, as he collapsed and fell into a deep slumber for the second time that night.

The next day, Jonathan was brought before the battalion commander. Jonathan feared the worst. He hadn't disobeyed orders, but he hadn't been forthcoming as to his reason for leaving the aid station. The commander, a colonel named Blaine Stewart, was from Alabama. He motioned for Jonathan to sit down.

"Private, that American soldier you rescued at the end of the day..."

"Yes, Sir."

"His name is Jimmy Wilkins and he's the son of a friend of mine. I never could have gone home to Birmingham if anything had happened to that boy. Thanks to you and your fellow medic, Jimmy's going to be fine."

"Glad to hear it, Sir."

"But what the hell were you doing in enemy territory on your own? We need medics in this army and we don't appreciate it when one of them risks his life on a stupid and unauthorized mission."

"I understand, Sir. But I can explain."

"Private, you don't have to explain. I know the whole story and I'm furious at both your stupidity and the way you misled a higher-ranking soldier."

"I'm sorry, Sir."

"No, you're not. You thought that what you did was right and you would probably do it again under the same circumstances. The whole episode is going on your record."

"Yes, Sir," replied Jonathan dejectedly.

Stewart observed Jonathan's look of dejection, but slowly the officer's scowl began to fade. "What you did last night was stupid and irresponsible." Then, with a sly smile, he walked over to Jonathan and patted him on the shoulder. "Your stupidity will also go down as one of the most noble and heroic things we've seen around here. We all know the German medic helped Jimmy. When you brought the *Kraut* in, it helped remind all of us that the men we are fighting are soldiers just like us. Some of them, maybe almost all of them, are Nazi pricks. But some of them, like the guy you brought in, are decent and would like to be home just as much as we would like to be back in the States."

"Yes, Sir."

"Yes, and I intend to say so in my report. Son, I'm in awe of what you did and I'm grateful to you for having brought a little

bit of humanity into this miserable war. Now, is there anything I can do for you?"

Jonathan was caught off guard by what the colonel had said. He didn't want to do anything that would detract from the moment, but he did have a request. "Sir, word is that the 34th is pretty well beaten up. But I still want to be in the thick of it."

"Go on," said the colonel, now eyeing Jonathan with interest.

"I hear through the grapevine that there's going to be a major Allied invasion of France and, when that happens, we're not going to stop until we reach Germany."

"I guess that's pretty common knowledge at this point. But what has that got to do with you?"

"You've heard about the camps?"

"Yes, I'm afraid I have."

"When our boys march into Germany, I want to be there. I want to see the camps first hand. You're right that I would go out into the dark of night to save another German medic if the same circumstances arose as last night. On the other hand, the Nazis killed my mother, my father and my stepmother. I loathe the Nazis and everything for which they stand. In my mind, they are war criminals—brazen, heartless and unfathomably cruel, particularly to us Jews. When we get to those camps, I want to be there so I can bear witness. I don't know what's happening there, but I want to round up the filth of humanity who run those camps and make them pay."

"Soldier, we've got lots to do until we take Monte Cassino. As soon as that's done, we'll see where things stand. If you're correct that a Channel invasion is close at hand, I will personally issue the orders that direct you to whatever fighting forces are readying for the assault on France."

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Three months later, after several hard-fought advances by the New Zealander 2nd Corp, the French Expeditionary Corps, and

the British 13th Corps, coupled with an almost nonstop Allied bombardment, the German forces at Monte Cassino retreated. On May 18, when the Allied forces worked their way up to Monte Cassino and entered the monastery, they found nothing but rubble.

The Allied losses had been appalling, but the road to Rome was now open. Two weeks later on June 4, the American Fifth Army, led by Mark Clark, marched into a liberated Rome. As Clark's jeep worked its way through the Appia Nouva, the *new* Appian Way, crowds packed the streets and greeted the American general and his forces with tumultuous roars of welcome and thanks. Clark, a convert to Christianity whose mother had been Jewish, made his first stop in Rome at the Great Synagogue. The symbolism of the general with Jewish roots entering the most venerable place of Jewish worship in Rome was lost on none.

As Jonathan marched with the other soldiers of the Fifth Army through streets strewn with welcoming flowers, he could not recall a prouder moment in his life. Nevertheless, he could not shake the feeling of sadness that overtook him, knowing his father would never receive the hero's welcome he, too, deserved.

Chapter 16
In France, Jonathan Joins Patton's Third Army
June–December 1944

On the evening following the liberation of Rome, an event of even greater historical moment was playing out on the south coast of England. Operation Overlord, the long-anticipated invasion of France, was underway. From the seaside communities of Portsmouth, Southampton, Shoreham, Portland and Dartmouth, a giant armada of almost 7,000 ships, arrayed in 75 convoys, was forming for the crossing of the English Channel. Their destination would be the Normandy coastline to the southeast of Cherbourg and to the west of Le Havre.

For months the Germans had known the invasion was at hand, but the exact date and landing place had remained a secret. This uncertainty posed a substantial problem for the Germans, for their observation units along the coast were stretched thin.

The Allies had made German intelligence even more difficult through deception. Twenty-Eight British officers had been secreted to a castle in Scotland. All during the winter, they had broadcast easily intercepted messages suggesting that the British Fourth Army planned to invade Norway. In addition, the previously discredited Patton had been rehabilitated and was now in Dover, serving in a fictional capacity as the head of an imaginary invading force.

Throughout the winter, Patton's fictitious headquarters was choked with Allied communication traffic, with each message making reference to a planned Allied invasion route from Dover to Calais across the straits. So large was Patton's shadow that the

Nazis could only draw one conclusion from this charade—the invasion would, indeed, follow Patton across the channel to Calais.

The British had devised additional diversionary tactics to reinforce these misperceptions as the invasion was about to get underway. Early on June 5, British Lancaster bombers flying high above the straits near Dover dropped aluminum foil strips, while their companion ships below towed reflectorized balloons. Both diversions would be picked up by German radars, leaving the impression that an invasion route bound for Calais was underway.

However, even if these diversionary tactics were wildly successful, the Allied commanders had no delusions about the difficulty of the task ahead of them. Weather was a factor. The seas along the way to the intended landing areas were notoriously turbulent. The tides were also a factor. The planned landing sites experienced some of the greatest tidal fluctuations in the world. The difference between high tide and low tide could translate into 300 yards of exposed beach. Resupplying was also an issue. Finally, once in the water, the invading infantrymen would be dangerously weighed down with heavy packs as they tried to evade a wall of firepower from the German coastal batteries.

Hour after hour on June 5, under cover of night, the 75 convoys steamed from the South of England toward the Normandy coast, preceded by a small armada of mine sweepers and protected by an air cover of more than 12,000 airplanes. Of course, their destination was not Calais. Rather, their precise landing site consisted of five beaches just southwest of Le Havre and codenamed, from west to east: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword.

The invading army was divided into five task forces, one for each beach. Each of the beaches presented different terrain and unique challenges, but none more so than the six-mile wide Omaha Beach. A 100-foot bluff towered over the beach. The waters were hard to gauge and the shore was the most isolated of the five beaches.

A massive parachute drop preceded the amphibious assault. The drop took place under cover of dark early on the morning of June 6. More than 13,000 paratroopers from the US 82nd and 101st Airborne, followed by almost 4,000 glider-borne troops, swooped down on Utah Beach with the goal of securing roads leading to the beach. At about the same time, the armada of ships anchored about 12 miles offshore began to unload heavy artillery and personnel. Then, under cover of unrelenting naval fire and aerial bombardment, the invasion began around 5:30 in the morning. More than 150,000 fighting men alighted from their landing craft and headed for the French shoreline.

The Americans led the way. The US 4th Infantry Division hit the shore at Utah Beach and, by noon that day, had successfully joined forces with the 101st Airborne. The fighting was unrelenting, but out of 23,250 troops, there were only 300 casualties.

At Omaha Beach, the casualties, particularly from the first wave of invading soldiers, were appalling. From the start, the invasion went sour. The plan had relied upon 29 amphibious Sherman tanks to unload from their respective landing craft and, once on shore, provide cover for the invading soldiers. However, the tanks were released too far offshore, where unexpectedly high swells swamped 27 of them. As a result, the men of the nine invading Ranger companies and the fighting personnel of the US 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions had no armor to lead the way. The scene was horrific, as heavily burdened soldiers were either swallowed up by the turbulent seas or gunned down as they tried to reach shore.

In all, 2,400 out of 34,250 American troops who invaded Omaha Beach lost their lives that day, most from the ill-fated first wave of invaders. Those who survived had to withstand continuous fire from the entrenched German defenders who occupied the bluffs overlooking the beach. Only after two Ranger battalions, using grappling irons and rope, courageously scaled the

100-foot cliffs and took out the heavily protected Nazi gun emplacements were the weary invading soldiers able to breath more easily and assess their gains.

When it was over, 9,000 Allied soldiers had fallen in battle. But a bridgehead had been established connecting Utah, Omaha and Gold beaches. The Allied invasion of France was underway.

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Word of the successful Allied landing spread immediately. In Rome, Jonathan had been celebrating the liberation of the city with men from his unit. A messenger arrived and advised Jonathan that Colonel Stewart wanted to see him. The messenger escorted Jonathan to a nearby hotel where Stewart was having a drink with some fellow officers.

When Jonathan arrived, Stewart stood up, put his arm around Jonathan's shoulder and said to his fellow officers, "This is the soldier I was telling you about who hasn't had enough fight down here and wants to head to France." Now looking at Jonathan, Stewart continued, "Well, Soldier, it looks like we've arrived in France and you're about to get your wish. Patton's been given command of the Third Army, which is now readying itself to cross the Channel into France. His boys are green as hell and could use all the help they can get. You're going to be there to help them. You ship out in two days."

"Thank you, Sir," replied a surprised Jonathan.

"You're welcome," said Stewart as he foxily pulled something out of his pocket. "Now, there's one more thing."

Jonathan looked puzzled, wondering what the *one more thing* could be.

"You're going as a corporal. Better get these stripes sewed on to your uniform. Congratulations, Corporal Sternbloom."

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Patton had been given a new lease on life. As he waited in England for his Third Army to be assembled, he reflected on how

his star had been so ascendant after Sicily only to come crashing down after the incident at the army hospital. *Why couldn't I have left well enough alone*, he thought to himself ruefully. *Why did I have to lose my temper, slap those two hospitalized enlisted men and call them cowards? After all, the men were under the care of military doctors who were treating them for battle fatigue.* His stupidity had lost him his command. *Well, thank the Lord,* he thought, *things have died down now and I've got the Third Army. If only I can mold these greenhorns into a fighting force, the world will know I'm back.*

By June, when Jonathan arrived and was assigned to the Third Army's 6th Armored Division, Patton's new recruits were beginning to look like soldiers. They were preparing to cross the channel into France. The next month, Patton's charges were sailing to the Normandy coast. On August 1, the Third Army became operational and started its breakout into France. Their first assignment was in support of General Omar Bradley's 8th Army Group in Operation Cobra, the encirclement of 300,000 German forces near the French town of Saint-Lô, in what became known as the *Falaise Pocket*. Cobra was a great success, although at a very high price. Ultimately, the Germans found a hole in the *Pocket*, but only for the purpose of retreat. The conquest of Normandy by the Allies was now a foregone conclusion.

Not wishing to give the enemy any comfort, Patton had his Third Army moving inland at a breakneck pace. Taking advantage of Ultra intelligence and light aircraft aerial reconnaissance, Patton's soldiers moved rapidly and efficiently. However, it was the general's indomitable spirit and determination that propelled his fighting men. By the end of the month, the Third had reached the Moselle River Valley, famed for its beauty and wine, and was poised to hammer its way into Germany. But even Patton could not single-handedly move his tanks and armored vehicles without fuel. His army stalled just short of the Moselle. There, it remained for over a month until it received fuel and supplies. The

delay provided the Germans with an opportunity to reinforce their defenses near the ancient and heavily fortified city of Metz. Situated between the Moselle and Seille rivers, the German-speaking city of Metz had been annexed by the Reich shortly after the German conquest of France. It was considered an essential prize by the Allies. There was no choice but to go after it.

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The Third Army started its assault on the Metz fortifications in late September, only to be continually repulsed. Casualties on both sides were running high and some voices within the Third began to wonder about the merit of the attack. When the final assault was launched in early November, Jonathan was administering one of the aid stations near the battle. He had been in France for four months and the exhaustion of battle was wearing on him as on the other Third Army soldiers.

The wonder drug, penicillin, was now part of every medical corpsmen's first aid kit. As a result, battlefield wounds that might have become infected and gangrenous were now being held in check until surgery could be performed. However, supplies sometimes ran out.

As casualties poured in daily, Jonathan wondered whether even so noble a war as this one justified so high a cost. On the day in question he had little opportunity to think, as the number of wounded began to swamp the aid station and outpace the capacity of the battlefield ambulances. Suddenly, two army medics came running toward the aid station carrying a wounded soldier on a litter. The medics had applied a tourniquet to the soldier's leg wound and had administered penicillin, but blood continued to spurt from the soldier's thigh. Jonathan had observed the treatment of a similar wound while working on a *kibbutz* in Palestine as a teenager and the scene rapidly flashed through his mind. Quickly, he concluded that the soldier was experiencing an arterial bleed.

Jonathan rushed over to the wounded man and felt his pulse. It was weak and erratic. Alarmed, Jonathan directed the litter bearers to lower the stretcher to the ground where he put his medical pack under the man's buttocks and raised the soldier's unaffected leg. At the same time, Jonathan applied pressure to the soldier's wounded thigh. Again, Jonathan tested the soldier's pulse. The pulse stabilized and he could hardly suppress his delight. Jonathan directed the litter bearers to raise the stretcher, while he continued to apply pressure to the wound.

There were no ambulances available and the wounded soldier's injuries were serious. Jonathan decided to stay with the man as the two medics took him to the closest evacuation hospital. Jonathan walked side by side with the litter, applying pressure to the wound all the while. Two hours later, Jonathan, the two medics and the wounded man arrived at the evacuation hospital. A doctor was on hand and immediately came out to assess the situation. The doctor asked Jonathan what had happened.

Jonathan began to explain how he had stabilized the man's blood pressure. While providing a description of events, Jonathan inadvertently lifted his hand from the stricken soldier's wound. Immediately, blood began to spurt out. Jonathan quickly returned his hand to the wound and reapplied pressure. The flow of blood began to abate. Quickly, the litter bearers lifted the man on to a nearby table and the surgeon sutured the torn artery.

Afterward, the surgeon thanked Jonathan and the other two medics and advised them that their commitment to duty had saved the wounded man's leg. The two medics headed for a place to sleep, while Jonathan lingered to observe the wounded soldier. While Jonathan was in that posture, the doctor turned to him and said, "Corporal, I never had a chance to introduce myself. I'm Major Stanley Rothman, now assigned to assist General Patton's 6th Armored Division."

"Nice to meet you," said Jonathan, as he and the major shook hands.

With an ingratiating smile, the major continued. "Where the hell did you learn the *Trendleburg* position for stabilizing that soldier's pulse?"

Not hesitating to consider that his answer might seem a little farfetched, Jonathan merely answered in a matter of fact tone. "When I was younger, I observed a medic perform the same maneuver in Palestine."

"Palestine?"

"Yes. Then I heard about it again in medical school, Sir."

"What? You have medical school experience! What's your name?"

"Jonathan Sternbloom, Sir. I spent three semesters at UCLA Medical School."

"You're medical-school trained," Rothman intoned, almost disbelievingly. "And you're a *landsman*," exclaimed the major, using the Yiddish expression for a fellow Jew. "We could use someone like you here in the evacuation hospital. Boy, could we ever! If I could pull the right strings, would you consider being stationed here?"

"To tell you the truth, I would like it. I worked in an evacuation unit in Italy and was looking forward to being a combat medic. But after being in the field for more than half a year, I'm exhausted and I'm always cold at night. I wouldn't mind having a tent over my head on a regular basis."

"Then consider it done. But I do want to warn you in advance: our unit moves around so much that the nickname for the hospital is the "Moving Docs." So, I can offer you a tent roof, but I can't tell you where that tent is going to be located."

"No problem."

"Good. Now get something to eat and get some sleep. I'll take it from here."

Chapter 17
Surgery and a Medal at Bastogne
December 1944

With the fall of Metz in November, the Nazi armies retreated into Germany and the Allies were ready for the final push into the German heartland. However, weather became a serious problem. Already, there were signs the winter would be one of the coldest in recent history. Allied forces had penetrated the staunch German line of defense known as the Siegfried Line. The German city of Saarbrucken was now under heavy attack. Patton's 6th Armored Division moved steadily toward that heavily bombed city, but the cold began to influence the pace of the attack. By the onset of December, the weather had worsened. Daily, fighting men came to the evacuation hospital with frozen hands and feet. The number of amputations due to frostbite mounted dramatically and Rothman and his colleagues could barely keep up with the parade of frostbitten soldiers.

When Jonathan had been at the evacuation hospital for a month, he was working in one of the operating tents as Rothman's surgical assistant. He was distressed not only by the incidence of frostbite victims, but by the shortage in the penicillin supply. Some men were still arriving from the front with terrible infections because the medics had run out of penicillin. On the afternoon of December 18, Jonathan was assisting Rothman and thinking about the shortage of penicillin, when another officer came running into the tent. "Stan, have you heard? The Germans have mounted a counteroffensive in the Ardennes Forest, and Patton's going to address the troops before we head north to Belgium."

"When?" asked Rothman, with surprise and excitement in his voice.

"In one hour. There's been a lull on the field and soldiers who are not fighting are all to assemble at command headquarters. Those of us in the hospital who are not deemed essential will be allowed to go to the assembly. Unfortunately, you and I can't go because of surgical obligations. But I've told my medical tech that he can go."

Without hesitation, Rothman turned to Jonathan. "Well, it looks like this is your chance to meet Patton. I can complete this by myself. Now, go on and report back to me after you hear the great man speak."

One hour later, Jonathan stood in the cold along with several thousand of his fellow soldiers. If for no other reason than to keep warm, the soldiers moved around talking to one another while they waited for their commander. Suddenly, the entire assembly hushed as if one. Patton jauntily alighted the makeshift dais that had been constructed for the occasion and looked down at his fighting men.

"I know what you're thinking. The old man wouldn't be here unless there was bad news." With this, many of the men standing in front of the dais began to laugh. Good naturedly, Patton held up his hand, signaling he wanted to continue.

"Well, gentlemen, you'd be wrong. Why? Because the opportunity to fight a great battle on behalf of your country is good news. This truth has never been more obvious than in this shitty war, where our foes are the worst sort of vermin ever created by the Almighty."

Patton looked out at the audience and was gratified to see his troops nodding in agreement. He continued. "As you soldiers know, we've had the God damn Nazis on the run. However, some of our intelligence guys have been predicting a counter offensive. While most of the brass in the army has either been too over

confident or just too plain stupid, the Nazis have been readying themselves for such a counter assault. Two days ago, on December 16, in what we are calling Operation Autumn Mist, three German armies—their 5th and 6th Panzers and their 7th Army—shot out of the Eifel Mountains in Belgium and caught us with our pants down as they stormed out of the Ardennes Forest. Hitting us hard from both the ground and the sky, the fuckers have penetrated 50 miles through our lines and are almost at the Meuse River."

Patton hesitated for a moment to make sure he had made his point. When he was satisfied he had, he continued. "I just met with Ike and he's not happy about the way the Krauts managed to surprise us. He's dispatched two divisions to hold two critical junctions—one at St. Vith in the north and the other at Bastogne in the south. But they can't hold out for long. That's where we come in. Because our intelligence guys have been anticipating such a counter offensive, we've been ready to move on short notice. That short notice has come. We move out soon. We'll take three divisions and we're going to the site of the heaviest fighting at Bastogne. We're also going to take two evacuation hospitals with us, so we'll have to wait until they're fully dismantled. We've assigned extra men to help with the process. Once that happens, we go. Are there any questions?"

Everyone knew Patton's invitation to present questions was merely a rhetorical flourish—everyone, that is, except for Jonathan. All of a sudden, Jonathan felt his right arm shoot up as the soldiers nearby looked at him in horror. "Yes, Soldier, what is it?"

At first Jonathan spoke with a tremor, but then he got hold of himself and spoke more confidently. "Sir, I'm a medic with the hospital unit assigned to the 6th Armored Division. We're better known as the Moving Docs. After the war I hope to return to medical school to complete my studies, so I worry about medical concerns."

Now interested, Patton motioned for Jonathan to continue. "Sir, we've seen some remarkable benefits from the new drug, penicillin. Where guys would come in with terribly infected wounds, we see less of that now. But lately, the supply of penicillin has been erratic. I just want to make sure we'll have enough wherever we are to make sure that we can do our job."

"Thank you, Corporal. As you can imagine, this is not my area of expertise. But protecting my fighting men is. I'll make sure my quartermaster takes care of it. I'll be through in a moment. I'd appreciate if you would come to my tent so that we can talk further."

When Patton left the stage, the soldiers all around Jonathan began to touch and pet him in mock admiration. However, Jonathan didn't linger. Immediately, he headed for the general officers' tent, where he was escorted to Patton's personal quarters. The first thing Jonathan noticed was Patton's pearl-handled Magnum sitting on his desk. Jonathan was speculating about the gun when Patton entered.

Jonathan sprang to attention at the sight of this grandee of the military establishment. "At ease, Corporal. What's your name?"

"Corporal Jonathan Sternbloom, Sir."

"Jewish?"

"Yes, Sir."

"I know the word is out that I'm not much of a Jew lover. But, don't worry soldier. I make no distinction when it comes to my fighting men."

Taken aback, all Jonathan could say was, "That's good to know."

"Right. And when I hear what the Nazis are doing to your people, I just want to wring every one of their fucking necks."

"I often feel the same way."

"I asked you to come by, but not because I want to learn more

about penicillin. I got your message loud and clear. I just wanted to meet you and say thanks. You're the first soldier since I have been giving these talks who has had the balls to ask a question—and, a good question it was."

"Thank you."

"No need. Now, you said you had been in medical school?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Whereabouts?"

"UCLA."

"Son of a bitch! I'm a Los Angeles guy myself—born and bred in San Gabriel, before I headed East for VMI and then West Point. How is Los Angeles these days?"

"The truth is the whole place looked like a pile of medical books to me."

"Well said, Soldier. Now, you'd better get back to your unit. Your hospital is one of the two heading for the Ardennes. They're probably picking up stakes at this very minute."

"Thank you again," said Jonathan as he saluted smartly, and took satisfaction as Patton saluted back.

*****

When Jonathan returned to the Moving Docs, he found the hospital dismantling process was already underway. Not only that, he found out quickly that word of his temerity in asking Patton a question had preceded him. Wherever he went within the hospital, men and women kidded him. The intent was always good-natured, but Jonathan hated the attention.

Jonathan ran into Rothman who, in a mock display of obeisance, bowed as Jonathan entered the tent where Rothman was tending to a patient. Rothman then raised his hands high and bent at the waist in a theatrical gesture of supplication. Jonathan tried to put a halt to Rothman's antics, but Rothman was having too good a time and continued his playfulness by expressing appreciation that so important a personage as Jonathan had chosen

to visit the hospital. Jonathan tried to be serious, but he couldn't hold it in. Finally, he burst out in laughter and soon both of them were holding their sides as peals of laughter filled the tent. Even Rothman's wounded patient began to laugh, although he wasn't quite sure why.

*****

The next morning, after all the patients had been evacuated to other hospitals, Jonathan, Rothman and the other members of the Moving Docs joined up with their new battle group, the 4th Armored Division. A second evacuation hospital, attached to the 26th and 80th Infantry Divisions, joined the departing soldiers.

Late in the day on December 21, the 4th approached the Allied stronghold of Bastogne. The city was located a few kilometers above the southern end of a bulge in the line of battle, representing the forward progress made by the Germans during their recent offensive. The town occupied a critical juncture on the way to Antwerp—the Nazis' goal. If Antwerp were to be taken, Bastogne first had to fall. The Nazis had subjected the town to a terrible siege. Everywhere, the sound of gunfire was unremitting. The added firepower that came from Patton's forces added to the deafening roar of a huge battle—one the press was calling the *Battle of the Bulge*.

Hundreds of thousands of men were doing their best to kill one another. Since the initial breakout from the Ardennes, the Germans had added about 100,000 men to their original fighting force of 250,000. While the Allies could martial twice that number, they were still reeling from the initial German surprise attack. The cold and the snow made easy casualties of men on both sides. All around, shivering soldiers sought shelter from the unbearably frigid conditions. When the soldiers did emerge to fight, they feared frostbite as much as the enemy's bullets. It was into this vortex of devastation that the tank crews of the 4th Armored Division pointed their gun turrets.

All through the night, as a cannonade of mortar fire continued unabated, Jonathan and his comrades worked feverishly to set up the tents as close to the battle as prudent. By the end of the following day, they were in business and the casualties began to come in. Many of the wounded succumbed to the cold before they arrived at the hospital. Others arrived with frostbitten limbs as well as wounds from shrapnel, bullets, explosions and freak accidents occasioned by the driving snow, miserable vision and severe fighting conditions.

As with many of their colleagues, Jonathan and Rothman were required to put in 18-hour days. The pressure was unrelenting. Jonathan watched with admiration, as well as professional interest, as Rothman patched up soldier after soldier. Jonathan knew that Rothman was exhausted. But as long as there were wounded to attend, Rothman remained in the operating tent. When Rothman took a break to catch some sleep, Jonathan did the same. In this manner, the two spent the first three days at Bastogne, alternating between intense, demanding periods of wakefulness and short periods of deep sleep.

Christmas Eve arrived on the third day after the arrival of Patton's troops. The men of the hospital unit had hoped for a respite. The casualties on the American side had been horrendous: 4,000 killed and 30,000 wounded or captured. Throughout the day, shrapnel from exploding mortar shells had been getting dangerously close and the commander of the hospital had given the order to pick up stakes. The Moving Docs were once again on the move. By evening, many of the tents had already been dismantled and most of the wounded moved to safer quarters. However, several of the operating tents remained functioning to take care of wounds that could not be delayed. Owing to the holiday, Jewish medical personnel manned these facilities to the extent available.

In the operating tent closest to the front, Rothman was surveying his newest patient. The man had been brought in on a

stretcher and had been in great pain before being sedated. He had sustained an open wound to the mid-shaft of his tibia—the lower part of the leg. The wound was distressing to look at, even for a seasoned physician such as Rothman. A jagged piece of bone had pierced through the skin of the patient's lower leg. All around the vicinity of the wound, Rothman could see pieces of shrapnel, dirt and debris.

Rothman concluded that there was circulation in the man's leg—a good sign since it indicated the blood vessels in the leg were intact. However, Rothman knew that he had to clean the contaminated wound or it would rapidly become infected before the patient reached a general hospital. Severe infection could lead to the loss of the limb.

Jonathan was in the tent to assist with the surgery. Another enlisted man was also present in case Rothman ran into problems. Rothman knew that he had little time to work because the hospital was being dismantled rapidly. Indeed, from where he stood, he could hear the sounds of tents being taken down all around him.

Quickly, Rothman directed Jonathan to lay out all that he would need to attend to the man's wounds: a scalpel, sterile sponges for cleaning the wound, retractors, sterile saline solution, forceps-like devices referred to as pick-ups, lap sponges, sutures, a drill and pins, cotton padding, cloth and wet plaster. Jonathan did as he was told and Rothman began. First, he removed the field dressings and wiped off the dried blood on the outside of the wound so he could get a better look at the extent of the damage. Then he asked Jonathan to pass him a scalpel and be ready with retractors to keep the incision open so he could irrigate and debride the wound, the process of cleaning the damaged area and of removing anything that might cause it to fester.

Carefully, Rothman moved the scalpel to where the incision would begin and he began to cut through the skin. Suddenly, the

telltale sound of a mortar shell whistling through the air made Rothman look up. Before he could return to his patient, the shell exploded just outside of the tent, sending shrapnel through the walls of the tent. One piece of shrapnel tore through Jonathan's sleeve, but left only a scratch on his arm. A second piece of shrapnel found its mark as the enlisted man who was standing nearby fell to the floor, a piece of metal sickeningly sticking out of his chest. Jonathan screamed, but instinctively fell to the floor to check the man's pulse. He looked up to tell Rothman the man was gone. Only then did he realize that Rothman was wounded. Shrapnel had caught the surgeon in the back of his leg and the forearm of his dominant arm.

Rothman was looking at his wounds and then he teetered, as his sedated patient lay on the operating table. Quickly, Jonathan caught the falling doctor and dressed Rothman's wounds as best as he could. Rothman started to feel better, announced he was okay and that he would sit for the duration of the surgery. But when he tried to hold the scalpel, he found the pain in his arm was too great for him to continue with a steady hand. He was feeling grim with pain, but he knew he had to act. "From the noise outside, the whole place is bedlam. There's not likely to be anyone one else to help. I'll continue to sit on this chair so I can give you instructions and assist with my good arm. You've seen me do this type of thing before. It's a lousy looking fracture, but the procedure is routine. You're practically a doctor, so you'll have to take over and complete the operation."

Amazed at what he was hearing, Jonathan did what he was told. Rothman continued, "First, do you see where I began the incision?"

"Yes," replied Jonathan, tremulously.

"Good," replied Rothman. "Now, with the scalpel, continue the incision for another few inches and cut out all of the foreign debris and remove it with the pick-ups."

Gingerly, Jonathan cradled the scalpel in his hand and said, "Okay, I'm ready." As Rothman issued directions, Jonathan painstakingly removed the contaminants and dead tissue from the wound.

"Good, Jonathan. As you make the incision, I'll insert the self-retaining retractors to help you visualize the extent of the wound."

Jonathan hesitated, knowing a patient's leg, and maybe even his life, depended on his resolve. He hesitated a moment more. Then, oblivious to the surrounding mortar fire and the sounds of pandemonium outside the surgical tent, Jonathan found his confidence and continued to cut as Rothman used the retractors to keep the wound open.

"Good," said Rothman again. "Now, see all of the debris that's in the wound—bone chips, torn muscle, dirt and metal fragments? Make sure you get all of it."

"Yes," said Jonathan.

"Okay. Do you see the sharp piece of shrapnel near the center of the wound? You've got to remove that without damaging the underlying tissues. So, gently, with your scalpel, cut around the edge of the shrapnel."

Jonathan carefully cut the jagged pieces of shrapnel away from the wound, gently teasing the fragments away from the wounded man's own tissues.

"Great," said Rothman. "That's a very thorough job. Okay, it's time to set the fracture. I want you to pull on the bone so that it falls into position. I'll tell you when to stop."

Carefully, Jonathan gently put traction on the bone, with Rothman guiding him each millimeter of the way. When the bone was where Rothman wanted it to be, he told Jonathan to stop.

"Terrific. Now, take a pin with a cutting bit and insert it into the hand drill. Use the key to tighten the drill chuck."

"Done," said Jonathan, as he fit the pin into the drill.

"Okay. You're doing great. Now, drill four pins through the repositioned bone, with two pins being positioned above the fracture and two pins below. Make sure the pins are an inch apart and that you drill through uninjured skin and tissue."

Jonathan did not know what kept him going. Perhaps he was just high on adrenalin. Whatever the case, almost without feeling what he was doing, he proceeded to drill four pins into the man's repositioned bone.

"We're getting there. Now, take the needle and suture you prepared for me and begin to stitch. You've seen me do it. This is not a beauty contest and no one is going to judge you on the appearances of your stitches."

Jonathan had, indeed, seen Rothman stitch many wounds and was surprised at how easily the process of stitching was going. All of a sudden, Rothman yelled out, "Too deep! You can't stitch that deeply. Otherwise, you'll stitch up the muscle fascia and compromise the muscle's circulation."

"Sorry," said Jonathan, startled. He made sure his additional stitches closed only the skin and not the fascia below.

"Nicely done," said Rothman. "Now, bandage the wound."

Once the wound was dressed, Rothman said, "We're going to need to cast the man's leg. The cast will help to stabilize the bone by incorporating the pins into the cast. This part should be easy. First, wrap the leg in the cotton padding. Then, take a cloth strip, soak it in plaster and apply it to the leg. Do it again and again until you've covered the entire leg with the plaster strips. Once you've done that, we'll be through."

Jonathan applied the strips carefully and with a surprising level of confidence. When he was done, he looked at the sedated man on the table. *Not bad for my first procedure*, he thought. *And*, he thought, *it would not be my last*. At that moment, he decided he would become a surgeon.

While Jonathan had been attending to the patient, he had heard the frenzied sounds of other men responding to their own emergencies. He had hoped some of them would find their way into the tent to help. Just as Jonathan finished, two enlisted men came bursting into the tent and were amazed to see Rothman propped up on a chair and Jonathan peering down at the patient.

Rothman instructed the men to evacuate the patient. As they left, Rothman asked Jonathan to lend him a shoulder so he could leave the tent. As the two men emerged from the tent with Rothman leaning on Jonathan, Rothman turned to the younger man with satisfaction. "Jonathan, I can't express my appreciation for what you just did and my admiration for your composure. I know you were in medical school at UCLA but if you want to matriculate elsewhere when we get back to the States, I will make it my business to help you get into any medical school of your choosing. I would, of course, prefer my own alma mater, Tufts. In the meantime, if you ever need a favor from me, no matter how big, all you have to do is ask.

Chapter 18
A Letter from Home
February–March 1945

All through December and January, the battle to push back the Germans raged unabated. The carnage was devastating, even by the standards of a war that had now gone on for five years. At the end of January, the allies took the strategic Belgian town of Houffalize, with Patton attacking from the south and British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery attacking from the north. The victory enabled the Allies to recover all of the territory lost to the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge, but came at a terrible cost. In the month since the Germans had vaulted through the Ardennes forest, 19,000 Americans had died and an additional 70,000 had been wounded or captured.

The Battle of the Bulge would go down as the costliest battle of the war for the Americans. For the Germans, the battle had been more than a crushing defeat. Most of the Nazi forces were now concentrated in the east against the Russians. German strength on the western front had been reduced to 26 divisions. By contrast, Allied forces in France and Belgium numbered 85 divisions, 23 of which were armored. After Houffalize, there was virtually no chance of another German counteroffensive in the west. The road to Berlin was now within clear sight of the Allies.

Once the fighting ended in the Ardennes, the Moving Docs were transferred back to the 6th Armored Division. The Germans continued to put up stiff resistance, but it was clear all they could muster was a defensive retreat back into the homeland. All the while, casualties flowed into the surgical tents of the Moving Docs. On March 21, when Allied tanks reached the Rhine at the

ancient city of Worms, the doctors and enlisted men of the hospital saw some respite. But even then, the hospital remained on high alert. Only after the 6th Armored Division crossed the River Main at Frankfurt, some four days later, did the staff of the Moving Docs begin to relax.

Viewing the war-torn city of Frankfurt from where he sat on the morning of March 26, Jonathan took stock. The war had moved so fast and the demands made on the Moving Docs had been so overwhelming that Jonathan, now the proud owner of a bronze star for heroism displayed at the field hospital in Bastogne, had had little time to think about Leslie. Now that he had a chance to reflect, he realized how much he missed her and how eager he was to return home after the war.

Leslie had been regular with her correspondence throughout the war. Her letters had been loving, upbeat, effusive and bursting with news about her classroom experiences teaching in Long Beach. But for the past few months, Jonathan had not received anything from his fiancée. Had Jonathan been a more pessimistic man, he might have drawn parallels between this vacuum and the waning months of correspondence before seeing Kayla in Montreal. However, his thoughts were not so negative. The letters he had regularly been receiving from Charlie's parents also had ceased over the past few months, leaving Jonathan to conclude that it had been too hard for Army mail to keep up with the frenetic wanderings of the Moving Docs.

Almost as if on cue, Jonathan heard mail call being announced. He wandered over to where the mail was being dispensed and tried not to let his eagerness get the better of him. At last, Jonathan heard his name called and quickly retrieved a letter with a Los Angeles postmark. He walked back to where he had been sitting and happily eyed the letter. But then his brow became furrowed and his face darkened. The letter was enclosed in a plain business envelope. By contrast, the letters from Leslie

had always been mailed in layered perfumed envelopes. The outside layer had been transparent glassine, while the inner layer had been aqua colored paper.

Quickly, Jonathan turned over the letter. To his growing disappointment, he realized the letter was from Charlie. Jonathan tore open the letter and began to read. It took no more than one paragraph for Jonathan's jaw to slacken and for his chin to sink to his chest. Charlie had started out cordially, noting Dianne and he were enjoying married life and that he was doing well at Dianne's father's law firm. Then Jonathan got to the meat of the letter:

> Jonathan, you know Randy has remained in Long Beach throughout the war and hopes to become a US citizen after the war. You must also know from the way Randy goaded us into that dreadful prank we pulled on Mrs. Zorrofsky that he can sometimes be insensitive, if not downright selfish. Well, it turns out Randy has been using Cybil as a foil. He never really liked her, but he found it handy to have her around so his real motives would not be apparent.
>
> I should have noticed, but never did. It seems Randy's real designs were on Leslie. Leslie never encouraged Randy. But she regularly attended his performances, particularly as he moved into the limelight with larger clubs. I didn't think much of it when Randy started to invite Leslie back stage after he performed because I knew how much she enjoyed the performances and I knew how sad she was because you were so far away and always in danger.
>
> Over time, Diane and I stopped going to Randy's performances as regularly as Leslie. The drive to Long Beach had become a pain for us. Living right there in Long Beach, however, Leslie had no problem in watching

Randy perform and getting together with him after each show.

Randy, as you know, is a handsome bloke and must have gotten to Leslie when her defenses were down. When it finally dawned on me what was happening, I confronted Randy and pleaded with him to keep his distance from Leslie out of respect for you.

Randy said Leslie was old enough to make up her own mind. In addition, I'm saddened to report what he said next. Jonathan, he said Leslie was pregnant and the two of them planned to marry. I thought he was kidding just to get me off of his scent. But a week ago, Randy and Leslie were married. Dianne and I were in attendance. It wasn't the Hollywood wedding Seymour had planned for Leslie and you. But Leslie looked happy, though I couldn't tell whether her happiness was real or feigned.

After the ceremony, Leslie said she didn't have the heart to write you and asked me to write in her place. I'm so sorry to have been the bearer of such bad news. My brother's behavior has been disgraceful, but I sincerely hope our friendship will continue. They say the Los Angeles area is going to mushroom beyond anyone's expectations. I hope to see you back here after the war so we can both participate in the boom when it comes.

Your friend always, Charlie.

As Jonathan sat in despair, he could only think that Los Angeles was the last place he wanted to go after the war, boom notwithstanding. He remained in this saddened state for a while, until he was jolted out of his despondency by a private who came to tell him he was needed in the surgical area.

Chapter 19
The Liberation of Buchenwald
April 1945

Created in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, Weimar was the birthplace of the German republic. Here, where Goethe was born, representative government reigned until the rise of the National Socialists in 1933. And here, in a bucolic wooded area about five miles northwest of the city, stood Buchenwald. Surrounded by electrified and barbed wire fences, Buchenwald had been constructed in 1937 as the centerpiece of a complex of 87 forced labor camps spanning the territory from Dusseldorf in the west to Moravia in the east. There were no gas chambers at Buchenwald of the kind Janós had known at Treblinka. However, like Treblinka, Buchenwald was a place of terror.

Every day, men were marched to nearby factories, quarries and labor camps and forced to work for the Nazi war effort. After work, they marched back to their their barracks. They existed on spare portions of disgusting gruel. When prisoners were too weak to work, they were shot or brought to a nearby camp to be gassed.

One building in the entire camp served as a latrine for tens of thousands of inmates. Putrefied ditches near the barracks handled the excess demand. Men slept five abreast in hard bunks and had little to keep them warm other than the threadbare shirts they wore on their backs.

Everywhere typhus, malnutrition and tuberculosis were rampant. Men died by the hundreds every week. Where disease did not take its toll, the harsh oversight of the guards did. Guards would lash out at their helpless victims for no reason, and the result was often deadly. Starting in 1941, Buchenwald was the site

of medical experiments that subjected men to hideous diseases and equally hideous deaths. Here, too, horrific experiments took place with the aim of ending homosexuality.

Every day, the bodies of the dead would be laid on the ground outside the barracks to be picked up by the camp's *Sonderkommando*. The bodies would then be taken to the camp crematorium, impaled on hooks and incinerated as unceremoniously as a pile of garbage at the local dump.

Originally a camp for political prisoners, Buchenwald had seen its share of Jews. Toward the end of the war, many of its inmates had even arrived after death marches from the east. By the spring of 1945, about a third of Buchenwald's prison population of 28,000 emaciated and malnourished prisoners were Jewish.

Patton's Third Army reached Weimar in early April. On the afternoon of April 8, an astonished Third Army headquarters received the following SOS message from Buchenwald: "To the Allies. To the army of General Patton. This is the Buchenwald concentration camp. SOS. We request help. They want to evacuate us. The SS wants to destroy us."

Headquarters wired back, exhorting the inmates to hold out. On April 11, a detachment of four men from the 6th Armored Division went to investigate the camp. By the time the detachment arrived, the prisoners had overrun the camp and chaos had erupted. Emaciated inmates with bodies that were more like cadavers than living beings were running around. Some were in pursuit of food. Others were in pursuit of a more attractive objective—the prison guards.

When the four soldiers arrived, they were treated like visiting royalty. But what they saw sickened them. They returned to their battalion and described the skeleton-like creatures they had found at the camp and the scene of filth and disease in which they had been imprisoned. The next day, the 83rd Infantry Division took over the camp. Three days later, General Patton, who had already

toured and been sickened by the Ohrdruf sub-camp at Buchenwald, prepared to visit the main camp.

The 120th Evacuation Hospital—which, along with the Moving Docs, was attached to the Third Army—had already arrived at Weimar when the 83rd Infantry Division took over at Buchenwald. Patton wanted a medical man with him when he visited the main camp and had asked the lead physician of the 120th to accompany him to the camp. As Patton surveyed the scene of abject misery, he turned to the surgeon, a well-trained Pennsylvanian from the Main Line of Philadelphia. "Colonel, how many personnel are in your unit?"

"Two hundred and seventy-three," replied the colonel.

"I've been briefed on the population of the camp. You know, 10,000 or so of these poor unfortunates are Jewish."

"I was unaware of the number, but I knew it was a lot."

"How many Jewish doctors and combat medics would you say are in your unit?"

"I haven't taken a count. But, I would guess not many, if any."

"Colonel, I want your entire unit in the camp by tomorrow. I want you to give these unfortunates the best care possible and I want you to keep records of what you see and the people you treat."

"Yes, Sir," said the surprised, but not displeased, colonel.

"Now," said Patton, "you know how these Jews like to keep together. Can't say I like it, but it's a fact. I also want some Jewish faces helping in the camp, and you may not have any."

"I understand. What do you have in mind?"

"I recently met with an impressive young combat medic. His name is Jonathan Sternbloom and he's with the Moving Docs. I want him there with your guys to provide reassurance to the Jewish survivors. I also want any other Jewish personnel attached with the Moving Docs to help out at the camp.

Four hours later, Jonathan, Rothman and two other Jewish physicians from the Moving Docs received orders to join up with the 120th Evacuation Hospital in a castle that had once been occupied by the Grand Duke of Weimar. The castle was a short distance from the Buchenwald camp. That night, for the first time in months, Jonathan, Rothman and the two other Jewish doctors, whose name were Wallenstein and Shapiro, slept in a room with a hard ceiling over their heads. When they awoke in the morning, the four introduced themselves to the commander of the 120th. They joined the vanguard of the hospital unit that was heading for the camp.

When Jonathan and Rothman arrived at the camp, they could not believe what they saw. In every direction, the emaciated figures of recently condemned men were going about the business of becoming free men. Some sat on benches enjoying the early spring sun. Some mended clothing. Others helped sick or stricken comrades. Others were waiting in line for food, sanitary necessities or new clothing. But wherever Jonathan and Rothman looked, the basic scene was the same: scarcely-clad beings, with skin barely covering bone and skull, looking bewildered, more dead than alive. In the two-hours it took the corpsmen of the 120th, operating at breakneck speed, to set up examination and surgical facilities, more than five dozen inmates collapsed, dead of starvation, typhus, scurvy, pneumonia or tuberculosis.

Even after Rothman and Jonathan started seeing patients, men by the dozens continued to expire, some just lowering their heads for the last time where they sat, others giving out loud screams of pain as they collapsed and fell to the ground. Rothman estimated there must have been more than 25,000 acutely ill survivors in the camp. Despite four years in the war, he had never seen anything as abjectly cruel. Patient upon patient told stories of brutality so unspeakable it defied belief: guards who took pleasure in maiming, killing and brutalizing the inmates in

their charge; 12-hour work days with no nourishment; wholesale eradication of prisoners when they were too tired or sick to work. The list went on and on, with each atrocity worse than the preceding one.

After working on several gentile prisoners, Rothman and Jonathan received a prisoner whose arm was hanging at a hideous angle and needed immediate medical attention. The man's name was György Frankel and he was a Jew from Hungary. The man spoke German, so Jonathan and he could converse. The story of survival he told was remarkable by any standard, but particularly so for a man who could not have weighed more than 95 pounds despite his six foot two frame.

Frankel had been at Auschwitz for five months before the Russian armies moved toward the camp. He had weighed 200 pounds when he arrived at the camp, and had survived because his size had enabled him to carry heavy loads. However, over time, he had lost so much weight due to malnutrition that he was afraid he would not be able to continue. He knew when a prisoner was no longer able to meet the demands of his captors, no matter how unreasonable the demands, the prisoner would be shot or, even worse, hanged and left to dangle as an example to other prisoners.

At night, Frankel shared a hard bed with two other prisoners. Only sheer exhaustion enabled him to sleep. Even at that, some nights the groans of his bunkmates prevented him from falling asleep. Toward the end of December, Frankel found himself sleeping with a tubercular, old man who could hardly breath. Frankel did not know anything about him. But Frankel did all he could to comfort the man, who was clearly dying a slow and painful death. Eventually, the appreciative man recognized he was dying. Not wanting his passing to be in vain, the doomed man insisted that Frankel preserve his strength by eating both of their rations. At first Frankel resisted but as his strength began to wane, he relented and ate both of their meager portions.

After holding out for several more days, the man died. Some of the prisoners came by to pay their respects and say *kaddish*, the prayer for the dead. Such behavior was unusual because death was such a commonplace event in the barracks, and any gathering, no matter the reason, was punishable. It was only then that he found out the man's name and learned he was a rabbi—indeed, the rabbi who had married Frankel's parents.

Soon after, Frankel and tens of thousands of other Auschwitz prisoners were rounded up, given a small pouch of food and made to march west where they would be used as slave laborers for the waning Nazi war effort. For almost 30 days, in the dead of winter, Frankel and his fellow prisoners marched through Poland to Germany. Anyone who couldn't keep up was shot on the spot or left to die. Thousands of marchers met their deaths every day. If the frigid temperatures and the lack of clothes didn't claim them, the guards did. After almost a month, Frankel and the other marchers reached Moravia. There, they were stuffed into suffocating freight cars and transported to the work camps in central Germany. By the time Frankel emerged from his assigned freight car at Weimar, the stench was overwhelming. Soiled from his own feces and despondent beyond measure, he alighted from the train car under watch of heavily armed guards. Only then did he realize one third of the passengers in the freight car were dead.

Rothman, with Jonathan's assistance, did his best to patch up the injured Frankel. The man's story deeply affected both of them. After a few days of treating camp inmates on a nonstop basis, Rothman and Jonathan realized every prisoner had a similar story.

As their first week came to an end, Rothman and Jonathan took a break and reflected on what they had seen at the camp. After a period of quiet, Rothman turned to his assistant: "Jonathan, by all accounts, our boys will be marching into Berlin in the next week or two and the war will soon be over."

"Yes. I've heard the same."

"One month ago, I couldn't wait to go home. But after a week at Buchenwald, I've come to realize that when the war ends, there are going to be hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of displaced persons who are going to be desperate for medical care."

Now alert, Jonathan nodded his agreement.

"Many, if not most, of these people are going to be homeless Jews like Frankel who will have no place to go and will need all the help they can get to survive."

Again, Jonathan signaled his agreement.

"My guess is that our boys are going to be needed to support those poor souls."

"I suppose you're right," replied Jonathan, wondering what Rothman had in mind.

"If that's the way it is, as I strongly believe will be the case, I want to be part of that effort. I plan on extending my tour of duty so I can be part of one of the great refugee relocation efforts in history. Jonathan, I know you're eager to get back to UCLA and I wouldn't blame you if you said no, but I would love to have you with me. What do you say?"

Jonathan did not know what to say. He only knew that, after hearing of Leslie's marriage to Randy, he did not want to return to Los Angeles and UCLA. Nor did he have plans to go anyplace else. Almost because he couldn't think of anything else to say, he said, "Sure."

Rothman smiled broadly, gave Jonathan an enthusiastic salute and indicated they should be returning to the surgical ward.

Chapter 20
Stelenberg Displaced Persons Camp
July–September 1945

By the end of April 1945, the 28 German divisions remaining in the western part of the country were offering mere token resistance. The American forces had taken control of the Ruhr Valley and were marching toward Berlin at breakneck speed. In the east, the Russian army was bearing down on the outskirts of Berlin. The Germans had lost the war and even Hitler could not deny it. On the afternoon of April 30, the Fuhrer and his wife, Eva Braun, resignedly bit into ampules of cyanide and the Third Reich was no more. On May 8, the day that would become known as VE Day, Hitler's successor, Karl Dönitz, formally surrendered to the Allies in Berlin.

In the tents of the Moving Docs, celebration was the order of the day. However, there was still much to be done. The war was still raging in the Pacific and, by many accounts, might easily last for another year. In Europe, order was needed to oversee the military personnel who would remain after the fighting had stopped. Despite the agreements reached among Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta, tension between the Russian forces and their western counterparts was palpable. An estimated million plus displaced persons sought whatever refuge they could find. In Germany, Austria and Italy, camps to accommodate them were hastily thrown together.

Both Rothman and Jonathan had served enough time that they could have requested a return to civilian status. Instead, each put in for a duty extension and requested assignment to one of the dozens of displaced persons camps that dotted Germany.

About a dozen of these camps were located in Bavaria, where Patton had been designated the military governor. Now, Rothman and Jonathan also found themselves heading there. Their specific destination was a displaced persons camp in the Bavarian community of Stelenberg.

The Stelenberg camp was one of a cluster of five displaced persons camps—or, DP camps, as they had come to be known—just southwest of Munich, where Patton's headquarters were located. Conditions in the Stelenberg camp were not as harsh as they were elsewhere. There was no barbed wire to hold in the camp's residents as was true of other DP camps, but camp conditions were wanting in many ways. Bedding was scarce, sleeping areas were cramped, disease was rampant, medicine was in short supply, and the food was high in calories and low in nourishment.

However, conditions were slowly improving as more of the camp's inmates returned to their native countries. For the camp's Jews, repatriation was problematic, if not out of the question. Many had been transported from the concentration camps of Poland and had no desire to return to the land where 3 million of their fellow Jews had been slaughtered. For these inmates, the options were few: languish where they were, find their way to one of the few western countries that would accept them, or try to reach Palestine.

Despite all they had endured, Stelenberg's Jewish population would have to suffer more. Even America, whose soldiers had spilled so much blood to eliminate the scourge of Nazism, held fast against immigration from Central and Eastern Europe, code designations for persons of Jewish ancestry. England still enforced its mandate over Palestine. The British were not interested in riling the local Arab population, so Jewish emigration to Palestine was capped at the suffocating levels established by what had become known as the White Paper of 1938. Unwanted, the displaced Jews of Stelenberg, and their fellow Jews in a host of other

camps like Stelenberg, huddled together, hoping for relief, with some still wearing the striped uniforms of their former places of Nazi imprisonment.

Rothman had been placed in charge of medical care at Stelenberg. One day in late July, as Rothman and Jonathan were surveying the camp's medical supplies, they were interrupted by news that a jeep was about to arrive with two important passengers who wanted to see Rothman.

Rothman excused himself just as the jeep drove up with a military driver and two well-dressed civilians. The civilians got out of the jeep and introduced themselves. The first to speak was the more senior of the two. "Major Rothman, if I have it correct? I am Earl G. Harrison, nominally dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. But much more importantly, I am President Truman's envoy to ascertain the condition of the displaced persons camps—I guess you folks here call them DP camps—in Germany and Austria. My colleague is Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz, European director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, which you probably know is the humanitarian organization that has been supplying much of the medicine and clothing to the camps."

Surprised, Rothman was capable at that moment of doing no more than politely shaking the hands of the two men in a simple gesture of greeting. Rothman introduced Jonathan to the two men and then asked how he could be of service.

"We've just come from Patton's headquarters in Munich. He was going over a list of army personnel at the local camps and remembered you and Corporal Sternbloom from Buchenwald. It's hard to say what's on Patton's mind when it comes to the Jewish refugees who are housed in the DP camps. I get the sense he's not very sympathetic. In any event, since Patton knows the two of you are Jewish and since your camp is closest to his headquarters, he suggested we start our inquiry with you."

"I see," said Rothman. "I've heard the same said of Patton. However, our contacts with him have been fine. For our purposes, I would be very happy to talk about conditions here. I'm sure the same is true of my two fellow physicians and Corporal Sternbloom."

"That's exactly why we're here," said Harrison with an air of assurance.

By now, Rothman had recovered from both the surprise of the visit and the importance of the visitors. He realized he was being given an opportunity to help that went beyond merely tending to the patients at Stelenberg. Before Harrison had a chance to dictate the agenda, Rothman looked at the other man and said, "Even more importantly, I would like to focus on the prospects of the inmates for reclaiming their lives and moving on."

"By all means," replied Harrison, in a reassuring manner. "Dr. Schwartz and I have been discussing that subject on the way here. What's on your mind, Major?"

"As you have been advised, my colleagues and I are all Jews. We have volunteered for this duty because we have seen the horrors of Hitler's death camps and we wanted to do something on behalf of those wretched survivors who emerged from the war with little more than the skin on their bones."

"Admirable. I feel the same way."

"I'm glad you do because the Jews in this camp and, I suspect, in all the other DP camps, are not like their fellow inmates. Poles can return to Poland and Hungarians can return to Hungary. But Jews, no matter their country of origin, have no place to go. Most are from Poland but, for reasons I'm sure are clear to you, they cannot consider going back to that land. Even if they were welcome in Poland, which I am told they are not, they would find it impossible to return to the scene of so much Jewish slaughter. They would never know whether their new neighbors had been complicit in the murder of so many of their relatives."

"So, what do you suggest?"

"Three things. First, Jews should not be classified based on the place of their origin; such places no longer exist. Instead, they should be classified simply as Jews, and the treatment they receive should reflect their status as Jews."

"Sounds quite reasonable."

"Thank you. Second, we are a bunch of military men doing our best to run this camp. But we need real experts who can help the camp's inmates organize, start schools, establish institutions, oversee hygiene, provide emotional care and assist in the transition back to freedom. We're not equipped to do these things, but I suspect the new United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency is properly equipped for the task."

"Right you are, again. What is the third consideration?"

"This one is a little more difficult, but probably the most important."

"Go on."

"Simply put, in addition to sustenance while they are here, the Jewish inmates must be given hope they have a place to go where they don't have to worry about a knock on the door in the middle of the night."

"I get your meaning. Where do you have in mind?

"The United States, of course. But I understand US politics may make it difficult for such a thing to happen."

"Noted."

"The other choice is Palestine, which the British designated as the homeland for the Jews as long ago as 1917 and which already has a sizeable Jewish population."

"Yes, Dr. Schwartz, here, has been expressing the same theme and I must say I agree with both of you. But the British are being quite unpleasant about the issue. Seems they like their Arab oil and don't want to do anything that would upset either their Arab suppliers or their Palestinian cousins. But I'll do my best in

bringing this matter to the attention of the president. Now, let's see what's happening here in Stelenberg."

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Two weeks after Harrison's visit to Stelenberg he wrote to Rothman, thanking him for his insights and for the tour of the camp. Harrison further reported that he had seen virtually all of the conditions found at Stelenberg at his subsequent visits to other camps in the region. Harrison was distressed by what he had observed and promised that Rothberg's three recommendations would be incorporated into Harrison's report to the president.

Rothman was delighted to receive the follow-up letter from Harrison and shared its contents with Jonathan and the rest of the medical staff. However, Rothman was still concerned about the camp's residents. After Harrison's visit, conditions at the camp began to improve, but not quickly enough to suit Rothman. More medical supplies were coming in every day, thanks in part to the Joint Distribution Committee. However, there was still a shortage of medical personnel—a particularly worrisome issue since Rothman now had to concern himself with day-to-day medical issues, as well as the full array of problems brought to the facility by the survivors of Hitler's concentration camps. Nevertheless, Rothman was determined to succeed and every day brought victories, both large and small.

In one respect, the Stelenberg camp was no different than any other place where men and women are thrown together in close quarters. However, in August 1945, few of the refugees had tasted freedom long enough for there to be many births. Only one obstetrician had been assigned to Stelenberg, and he shared his time with a neighboring camp. But births did occur and the doctor, a kindly physician named William Trelling from Michigan's upper peninsula, was kept busy.

Rothman held twice-a-week meetings with his medical staff so that all personnel would know about acute cases in the camp.

Through this means, Rothman and Jonathan became aware that Trelling was treating two pregnant women with potentially worrisome delivery issues.

In the case of the first woman, Elsa Gabowitz, the position of the baby had been unstable throughout her pregnancy and Trelling was concerned the baby might be in the breach position at the time of delivery. In addition, there was the worry that the constant movement of the baby might snarl the umbilical cord and cut off the supply of blood.

The other pregnant woman, whose name was Frieda Berkowsky, had experienced bleeding off and on during her pregnancy. Trelling worried about possible blood clots, so he prescribed bed rest for his patient. He also worried about the cause of the bleeding. If it was due to a torn or partially separated placenta and if blood had accumulated behind the tear, there was a risk of hemorrhaging and shock.

On top of all that, Trelling also worried about the position of the placenta. If the placenta covered the cervix, it would result in an obstruction at the time of delivery. Were that to happen, the descent of the baby could tear the obstructing placenta and cause severe bleeding. Trelling reasoned he could deal with this eventuality by having a donor or donors lined up if a transfusion were required. But Trelling had been able to do no more than monitor his patient, since any attempt at examination might, itself, have caused a tear in the placenta.

Though clearly concerned about his two patients, Trelling assured Rothman there would be no problem when the time came for the two women to deliver. He added that he was glad to be around since the problems could be quite dangerous if not handled properly.

Around the third week in August, Trelling became ill and had to be confined to quarters. Rothman was not particularly worried about Trelling's illness because medical personnel were always

coming down with something, particularly influenza. However, Trelling's illness persisted and Rothman arranged for him to be taken to a military hospital in Frankfurt. The authorities promised Rothman an English-speaking nurse with obstetrics experience from a nearby camp who could fill in during Trelling's absence.

On a Friday afternoon late in August, while Trelling was still being treated in Frankfurt, Rothman and Jonathan were partially through a procedure. Another medical corpsman was with them in the surgical suite, cleaning up from the day's activities. The three of them could sense the heightened activity level at the camp as men and women began to prepare for the Sabbath. All of a sudden a woman came bursting into the surgical building, agitated and out of breath. "It's Elsa Gabowitz! She's broken her water and she's in great pain. She's screaming and everyone knows she's had a difficult pregnancy. What do we do?"

Both Rothman and Jonathan knew Elsa was the pregnant woman with the unstable lie. Trelling, of course, was unavailable and Rothman could not leave his patient. In any event, Rothman was not sure he would be of much help. For a moment, he did not know what to do. Then he remembered the new Swiss nurse who had just arrived in camp. Quickly, Rothman turned to Jonathan. "Jonathan, Pete here will take over for you. Take this woman with you, go to the nurse's quarters and find the new nurse who arrived yesterday. She's Swiss, but I was assured she speaks English. I think her name is Lara something." Jonathan was feeling bewildered. "Then what?" he asked, not knowing exactly what his role was in the emerging crisis.

Rothman kept his eyes on his patient, but Jonathan could see he should not have asked the question. After a second or two, Rothman, looking uncharacteristically impatient, answered, "Do I have to spell it out for you? You know about the pregnant woman's condition from Trelling's briefings. Tell the new nurse

what's going on, take her to the pregnant woman and help out in any way you can."

Jonathan's face turned ashen. Treating mutilated and horrifically-wounded soldiers on the battlefield was one thing; assisting in the delivery of a baby was something else entirely. But Jonathan did as he was told. He motioned to the woman who had reported the matter and the two of them raced to the nurse's quarters. After a few inquiries, Jonathan was able to locate the living quarters of the new nurse, Lara Hoetschl.

Lara had already put in a trying day, despite having arrived at the camp a mere 24 hours earlier. She had been napping when she was summoned to meet Jonathan. Irritably, Lara came out of her room to confront the person who had intruded on her sleep. She was still groggy and barely looked at her tormentor. Her pique was matched only by Jonathan's sense of awkwardness, which, in turn, was matched only by the embarrassment he felt at what he was about to say. He tried to size up the woman before speaking.

She looked to be about Jonathan's age or maybe a year or two younger. She had medium length brunette hair that had become scraggly during her nap and looked anything but flattering. She was gaunt and her high cheeks had a hollow look. Jonathan was surprised at these aspects of her appearance, since he thought the Swiss had enjoyed respectable diets during the war. But mostly what Jonathan dwelt on were the woman's eyes. They were widely set and had a pronounced almond shape. But it was their color that fascinated Jonathan. Never had he seen eyes so surpassingly clear, yet so lustrously grey.

When the nurse finally looked directly at Jonathan, her eyes affected him in a way he could not explain. All he knew was that he had to find out what secrets lay behind the luminous recesses of those captivating eyes.

The awkwardness of the moment gradually dissipated. Jonathan recovered his composure and the nurse shook the cob-

webs from her head. It seemed that neither of them wanted to be the first to speak. Finally, still peeved at her rude awakening, Lara spoke in perfect English. "What is this all about? I'm told there is an emergency and when I come out, you stand there like Demosthenes with stones in your mouth."

"I . . . I'm so sorry, Nurse Hoetschl," stammered Jonathan. "It's Elsa Gabowitz. She's broken her water."

"Women break their water every day. Don't you have any midwives in the camp? And it's Lara, that is, if you can handle the informality!"

"Yes," replied Jonathan, thinking of nothing more to say. "I mean, no."

"No, what?"

"No midwives," stammered Jonathan, feeling only slightly competent to carry on the conversation. Absentmindedly, he found himself still drawn to the nurse's eyes. Then he regained his focus and remembered the pressing circumstances of his mission. "You have to help. Elsa's baby may be in a bad position and you're the only one in the camp with obstetrics experience."

"What about you? I take it from your rank you're not a doctor. What is your role in all of this?"

Again, Jonathan hesitated. "I'm a combat medic with surgical experience."

"Nice. Is that the extent of your experience in delivering babies?"

"I went to medical school for a year and a half and hope to return next fall."

"Well, we are in luck. I'm exhausted, yet, I have to deliver a baby who may be in a breach position or even worse. Even more breathtakingly, as my assistant, I have a former medical student who has never seen a woman in delivery, let alone one who is about to have a delivery fraught with peril. Let's not waste any more time. Where is she?"

Lara and Jonathan made their way to the pregnant woman's bedside, and Lara sprang into action. Confidently, she placed her hands on Elsa's abdomen for any indications of the position of the baby. She felt a hard bump in the upper part of the abdomen, but no bump on the lower part. Next, Lara put on her stethoscope and listened for the baby's heartbeat. She was able to hear the baby's heartbeat clearly in the upper part of the abdomen, but heard nothing below Elsa's navel. She turned to Jonathan. "Corporal, what is your name?"

"Jonathan, Ma'am. I mean Lara."

"Well, Jonathan, the baby is in breach position. We have to get ready for delivery. Please wash your hands and then I will do the same."

Jonathan did as he was told and watched with respect as Lara unhesitatingly went through her next set of examinations. "What now?" he asked, for lack of anything else to say.

"I'm going to examine the patient vaginally to try to figure out what position the baby has chosen." Lara inserted her fingers inside Elsa's vagina. As she explored, Lara's face changed expressions, none of which Jonathan could easily interpret. What Lara was feeling was a small indentation suggesting the space between the baby's buttocks. When the nurse removed her fingers, they were covered with meconium, the baby's waste product.

Again, Lara turned toward Jonathan. "We're ready for delivery and the baby is clearly in the upside-down breach position."

"What should I do?" asked Jonathan, apprehension written all over his face.

"First, we have to get the mother to start pushing. When she does, she will eventually release the cord. I will let you know what happens at that time."

After a few severe contractions and a commensurate amount of screaming, Elsa expelled the umbilical cord, as Lara had said

she would. As Lara swabbed Elsa's face, she motioned to Jonathan to hold the umbilical cord.

Stunned, Jonathan could only stammer out a question. "What do I do now?"

"Right, I forgot. You know nothing! All right, you're forgiven. Here's what you have to do. While looking at the second hand on your watch, try to evaluate the rate of any pulsations you feel. Do you feel anything?"

Jonathan didn't respond for about ten seconds and then reported he had felt about twenty pulsations during the 10-second period that had just elapsed. "Twenty pulsations. Is that normal?"

"Yes, it's fine," responded Lara. "Babies' hearts beat about twice as fast as our own."

All of a sudden, Elsa started screaming with pain from the contractions she was feeling and she started to push hard. Lara tried to encourage Elsa to hold back a little, but Elsa was not to be deterred. Soon enough, both Jonathan and Lara could see the baby's buttocks emerge from Elsa's vagina, but the baby's legs had not yet appeared. Elsa groaned some more and Lara encouraged her to keep pushing, but in a controlled a manner.

"What's happening now?" asked Jonathan.

"The baby's legs are still in the womb. That's a good sign."

"Why?" asked Jonathan, puzzled.

"Because the baby's buttocks are almost as large as the head. If the buttocks come out first, they will help make room for the head when it arrives. If the skinny little legs and hips were to come out first, they might not make any extra room for the head. If that were to happen, we could be looking at the baby's legs, hips and chest hanging out of the mother with the head still stuck inside of the womb. That would present a real problem because we would have to pull out the baby by its legs and run the risk of stretching the neck too much. I actually saw a baby get paralysis of her arm from such a

circumstance. Hopefully, in Elsa's case, the baby's head will come out smoothly."

Again, Jonathan asked what he should be doing. "Grab that towel over there and prepare to use it as a hammock for the baby's buttocks and legs. Make sure you hold the hammock parallel to the position of the mother."

Jonathan did what he was told and prepared to cradle the baby's buttocks and legs. They both exhaled a sigh of relief when they saw the buttocks come first. Soon the legs came out and Jonathan gently suspended them in the towel he was holding. Lara glanced over at Jonathan and noticed Jonathan was holding the hammock at too much of an angle. Quickly, she reached across Jonathan to demonstrate the proper position of the hammock. As she did, she brushed up against Jonathan so that he could feel the roundness of her breasts and the softness of her hair. Jonathan stood still for a moment, bewitched by what he had just felt. Elsa's cries brought Jonathan back to the present.

Soon, the baby's right arm and chest emerged. Lara placed her hand inside Elsa's vagina and then her cervix, and felt around for the position of the baby's left arm and head. A frown crossed her face. "I forget what they call this position, but it's not good. I'm going to have to rotate the baby's torso clockwise inside the mother to free the left arm. As I rotate, I want you to rotate the baby's buttocks and legs in unison with me. Ready?"

Jonathan was now reacting to Lara's instructions without thinking or questioning. "Yes, I'm ready."

Lara placed her hand in the crux of the baby's left arm and started to rotate. In a moment, the baby's left arm emerged. "Yay, we did it!" yelled Lara in an expression of relief and elation. "Now the head should come out freely. As it does, I want you to lift the hammock a little higher than you now have it."

Soon, the baby's head appeared. Lara instructed Elsa to pant without pushing too hard so the baby's head would be released

smoothly. When the baby's head did come out, Lara asked Jonathan to release the hammock so Lara could support the baby. Holding the baby firmly but gently, Lara then placed the newborn on the chest of her mother. "Elsa, it's a girl." As Lara spoke, she glanced at Jonathan and could see moisture forming in the corner of his eye.

Lara did not want Jonathan to know she had observed him crying. She hesitated for a moment and then cleared her throat. "Ah, we're not done yet. We still have to dispose of the placenta. It's not going to look very pretty, something like a slab of liver. When it comes out, wrap it in a towel. I will take care of it after the baby is settled. Thanks for your help. Also, I want to apologize for my rude behavior when we first met. I know how awkward this whole experience must have been for you and you did really well."

"No apology required," said Jonathan, finding himself once again under the spell of Lara's eyes. Thankfully, observed Jonathan, they were now more welcoming than defiant.

"No, I was rude. I've been working at the Feldafing DP camp a few miles down the road and just arrived here yesterday, exhausted and not knowing my way around. In addition, I've been under a lot of pressure because the kindly woman with whom I had been living when I first came here from Switzerland has been gravely ill."

"I'm so sorry," said Jonathan, "both for putting you on the spot and for your friend's condition. Is there anything I can do?"

"I wish there were. She is such a giving person and was so caring when she took me in. She does not deserve to be so ill. I don't want her to die."

Jonathan was ecstatic at being addressed by Lara in such an intimate manner. For a second or two, it dawned on him that his interest in Lara was unaffected by any thoughts of Leslie. The realization pleased Jonathan very much. Then Jonathan's thoughts

shifted to Lara's description of the ill woman and he began to dwell on his parents and Vanessa, none of whom deserved to die when they did. Now, tears were welling up in Lara's eyes. Not knowing what else to do, Jonathan chose to redirect the conversation.

"You're from Switzerland. Where did you learn to speak English?"

Lara wiped her eyes, an act which Jonathan would have liked to assist. "Yes, I'm from Switzerland. I grew up in a small hamlet in the Alps near the Austrian border and spoke only German. When I was 15, my parents heard about a wealthy English family who wintered in St. Anton in the Arlberg ski area of Austria, not far from my town. They had a daughter, Ethylene, who was about my age and had been born with a disfigured face. Her classmates taunted her mercilessly because of her deformity, and she couldn't remain in school. She was a good athlete, and her parents were hoping to find a companion for her who was a good skier.

"Were you a good skier?" asked Jonathan, while doing a poor job of masking the easily detectible glances he was casting in Lara's direction.

"I was a very good skier and, even at that young age, needed a job to help my family. I applied for the position and was hired. That winter, with my assistance, Ethylene progressed well on the ski slopes. She and I became good friends and at the end of the winter, Ethylene's parents asked if I would come back to England with them to stay with their daughter. They promised my parents I would be treated well and that I could even continue my education if I wished, since Ethylene was being taught at home by tutors. My parents agreed and I spent the next nine months in England keeping my friend entertained and studying with her tutors."

"Ah, that is how you must have heard of Demosthenes!"

"It was. In any event, I continued in my position through the next winter in Austria, which enabled me to see my parents. We

returned to England in the spring, when Ethylene was scheduled to have surgery. Her parents had heard about a revolutionary new procedure they hoped would improve her appearance."

"Did it?"

"Sadly, no. Ethylene died on the operating table. It seems she had been born with some other congenital problem that compromised her system while she was having surgery."

"I'm so sorry."

"Thank you. Her parents were destroyed by what had happened. They were kind people and wanted to reward me for how I had dedicated myself to their daughter. They offered to send me to nursing school and invited me remain in their house during my studies."

"How did you wind up back in Switzerland?"

"My name, I'm afraid. When war broke out, everyone in England became paranoid of German spies. I had completed my nursing studies and had begun working as a nurse. People began to speculate about my last name, Hoetschl. They thought I was German, and that was enough to label me as a subversive. I tried to address their concerns head on, but to no avail. When I started receiving threatening letters, Ethylene's parents decided it was time for me to return to Switzerland."

"Well, it's time for me to complete my nap." She again thanked Jonathan and the two of them headed back to their respective quarters.

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For Jonathan, the next few days felt like an eternity. At every opportunity, he passed by the nursing quarters hoping to get a glimpse of Lara. However, their schedules seemed to conspire against a chance meeting. A few days later, Rothman informed Jonathan that Frieda Berkowsky, the pregnant women who had experienced bleeding, was having contractions. Once again, Rothman directed Jonathan to seek out Lara.

Jonathan found Lara in the infirmary where she was removing a cast from a young woman's arm. Without announcing himself, Jonathan watched as Lara snipped through the cast and carefully removed it, all the while providing reassurance to her patient. Jonathan marveled at the movement of Lara's long fingers and of the caring way in which she related to her patient. Lara had applied makeup before starting her day's work, so her cheeks did not look as sunken as when Jonathan and she had first met. But makeup could not disguise how gaunt she appeared.

Soon, Lara finished her work. When she looked up, she was surprised to see Jonathan observing her. Instead of the scornful manner in which she had greeted Jonathan during their first meeting, her reaction in seeing him this time was more welcoming, although still laced with sarcasm. "Hello, Corporal. I had no idea you had such an abiding interest in the science of removing a cast from a recovered limb."

"Hi. I was just admiring your handiwork and the kindly way in which you related to your patient."

"Glad to hear it. But if that's the only reason you're here, I might be a bit disappointed."

What did she mean by that, thought Jonathan. *Was Lara's reply intended to mean encouragement*? On inspiration, he replied, "Though I would be pleased to be here for a lot of reasons, my purpose this morning is again professional."

"Don't tell me we're going to deliver another baby," said Lara with studied amusement.

"Why, actually, that's exactly the case! There is a second patient who is about to deliver. Her name is Frieda Berkowsky and she has had lots of bleeding during her pregnancy.

"I see," said Lara. "That can be serious. Where is she now?"

"In the delivery area. Her contractions began a little while ago."

Once again, Lara and Jonathan made their way to a pregnant woman's bedside. When they arrived, they could see Frieda's bed

was splattered with clots of blood the size of golf balls. Frieda was crying softly, more from worry than from pain.

Lara turned to Jonathan, concern written across her face. "We have to move quickly to find out what's going on. For this, I may really need your help."

"At your service," joked Jonathan with a mock salute. "Fortunately, I'm known far and wide as one of the reigning experts on difficult childbirths."

Lara's expression changed, as she chuckled at Jonathan's self-deprecating humor. But, she was quickly transported back to the present as Frieda cried out painfully in German, "Why am I bleeding?" Lara took the woman's hand in hers and reassuringly, in German, told the woman she would be fine. Without thinking, Lara continued in German as she began to issue instructions to Jonathan. To Lara's surprise, Jonathan replied in the same tongue, thinking that would help the patient feel comfortable.

Seeing that Frieda had calmed down, Lara turned to Jonathan: "Okay, let's move. First, let's try to find out the condition of the baby. Here, while I take a look at the bleeding, use my stethoscope to listen for the baby's heartbeat."

"Where do I listen?"

"Place the bell part of the stethoscope between the patient's stomach and pubic area."

Jonathan did as he was instructed and reported that the baby's heart had a nice fast rhythm. "If my experience with Elsa is any indication, this baby, too, is doing well. I would estimate better than 120 beats per minute."

"Good," said Lara, who was now busy looking at the source of the bleeding between Frieda's legs.

After a while, Lara lifted her head so she could speak to Frieda. "You've lost a lot of blood. But the good news is that your baby is ready to come out and I don't see any obstructions. It

doesn't look like the source of your bleeding has caused any problems that will get in the way of your delivery."

Frieda smiled with delight. After a moment's thought, she asked why she wasn't experiencing any pain from her contractions.

"Lucky you," said Lara. "Some women deliver without much pain. But that doesn't mean you are off duty. Please continue to push, but not too hard."

After a moment, Lara and Jonathan could see the baby's head begin to crown through Frieda's vagina. A few moments later, Lara was presenting Frieda with her brand-new baby boy.

Observing once again the miracle of new life, Jonathan could only marvel at how smoothly this delivery had gone as compared to Elsa's. He asked whether there was anything he could do.

"Of course," said Lara. "You may congratulate the mother."

A few minutes later, Frieda expelled the placenta along with a basin-load of bright and dark red blood clots. After making sure Frieda was fully occupied with her new baby, Lara started to examine the expelled material. She motioned for Jonathan to look at the placenta where several areas were stained with dark blood clots, each about two or three inches in length.

Jonathan could see the alarm on Lara's face. Quietly, so Frieda could not hear, Jonathan asked what the blood clots meant.

Making sure Frieda was too busy to hear, Lara replied, "It means Frieda is lucky that both she and her baby didn't die!"

"Wow," exclaimed Jonathan softly. "From what?"

"The blood clots are from a separation of the placenta. The doctors call this placental abruption. This is not a good condition because blood factors are used up in forming the clots. If too much of the blood factors are used up in this manner, there may not be sufficient factors left over to help the new mother stop bleeding after the usual blood loss from delivery of the baby and the placenta."

"What does it mean for Frieda?"

"Fortunately, the baby seems to have done well. But Frieda looks quite pale. As a result of the abruption, she may not be able to produce clotting factors fast enough to prevent hemorrhaging in her own body. We have to make sure she's not in any postpartum danger."

"How?" asked Jonathan, warily.

"Reach down and press on Frieda's abdomen. We are going to try to assess how well her uterus has recovered."

"It's hard as a rock," reported Jonathan, with worry.

"Don't fret. That's exactly the way it should be. The hardness indicates the uterus has contracted and that the bleeding should stop quickly."

Relieved and satisfied, Jonathan looked at Frieda who was experiencing the first thrills of motherhood as well as the relief of a safe delivery. Jonathan wondered whether the *brit milah*, the circumcision, that would take place in one week's time, would be the first one experienced at the camp. Lara, too, was satisfied and suggested the two of them have a cup of coffee in the camp's mess hall.

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As they walked toward the dining hall, Lara tripped and Jonathan caught her before she could fall. The touch of her body, bony as it was, filled him with excitement. He held on to her for the mere split second the occasion warranted and then reluctantly let go. In that fleeting moment, he sensed Lara, too, had been pleased with the manner in which she had escaped her fall.

After pouring their coffees, Jonathan and Lara sat down at one of the long benches in the dining hall. "I want to say it again," said Lara with obvious sincerity. "Thank you for your help. It was actually comforting having you at my side today, particularly since we were able to converse in German. I'm curious. Where did you learn to speak such perfect German? I know you're American, but your accent sounds British and certainly not German."

Jonathan was delighted that Lara found anything about him of interest. Though it was painful, he told Lara about his upbringing in Hamburg and the circumstances of his family's departure.

"Ah, you are Jewish! I guess that answers why you're here at this camp."

"I suppose it does," said Jonathan, as he started to explain. Then, as if a switch had been thrown open, Jonathan's explanation became a torrent of jumbled flashbacks. He told Lara about the disappearance of his mother, the death of Vanessa, his father's death in Libya and, finally, his visit to Buchenwald. When Jonathan was finished, he looked spent.

Lara looked at Jonathan sympathetically for a second or two. Without any self-consciousness, she walked over to the other side of the table and gently kissed Jonathan. Jonathan looked at Lara, his perception clouded by the simultaneous joy and melancholy he was feeling.

Lara sat down next to Jonathan who was still in a highly emotional state. She said half-jokingly and half-seriously, "You've been through a lot. It's a good thing I'm not a Nazi. You'd probably disown me or, even worse, string me up on the spot. I can't imagine how much you must detest them!"

"I do detest the Nazis, in every way imaginable. But, you! You could never be a Nazi. I watched the sensitive way in which you took care of your patient today and the caring manner in which you delivered those two babies. And, your eyes! They're not only beautiful. There's such a wonderful depth to them. They could never be the eyes of a Nazi."

"Thank you, Jonathan. Were you referring to my eyes when you said earlier today that you would be happy to observe me for a lot of reasons?"

"Yes," said Jonathan, without the slightest hesitation.

Chapter 21
A Portentous Discovery
August–September 1945

In the weeks that followed, Jonathan and Lara found ways to see one another. Each time they met, their encounter took on new meaning as their attraction to one another grew all the greater. Their moments together were rapidly crossing over from welcomed events to highly anticipated episodes of excitement. Their work schedules made it difficult to meet with regularity. When they did meet, they were content to hold hands and walk around the compound, hoping to find a quiet place where they could happily stare at one another and steal a kiss or two.

Late one afternoon, there was a knock on the door of the operating suite where Jonathan was cleaning up after the last surgery of the day. Jonathan opened the door. Standing there, looking more bereft and downcast than he had ever seen, was Lara. Over the weeks, Lara had been putting on weight. But on this occasion, she looked as haggard as the day Jonathan had met her.

Jonathan looked at Lara with alarm. "What's wrong?"

"It's my friend," said Lara, barely able to hold back her tears. I think she's dying and there are no doctors to be found. You're the only one I can turn to. Can you help?"

"Of course, I can," said Jonathan, wondering how exactly he could be of help. "What would you like me to do?"

"Can you get one of the camp doctors to see her right away?"

Right away, thought Jonathan. *That's a tall order.* The camp's doctors were all overworked and always had something to do.

But the last thing Jonathan wanted to do was disappoint Lara. Gamely, he responded, "I'll talk to Stan, I mean Major Rothman. In the meantime, please come in. Dr. Rothman is right next door and it shouldn't take more than a minute to talk to him."

Lara sprang up, put her arms around Jonathan and started kissing him appreciatively. Jonathan gently pushed her away. "If you keep that up, we'll never find anyone for your friend."

Jonathan then went in to see Rothman. The latter took one glance at Jonathan's unsettled look and knew that something was wrong. "What's going on, Jonathan?"

"Do you remember when you said that if I ever needed a favor, all I had to do was ask?"

"Yes. Do you need a favor?"

Jonathan nodded. He told Rothman about his involvement with Lara, and Lara's urgent need to find a doctor for her friend. Jonathan had not even had a chance to formulate the question he wanted to ask, when Rothman put up his hand. "Say no more, Jonathan. I've seen all my patients for the day and I really have little that is pressing this evening other than completing some annoying paperwork. I would be happy to see Lara's friend. Let me wash up and I'll find a way to borrow a jeep from the camp's motor pool."

Thirty minutes later, Rothman, Jonathan and Lara were on their way to the nearby town of Landsberg am Lech. Jonathan drove the jeep. After a short while, they crossed the bridge over the River Lech and followed Lara's directions. The sun was setting and the waters of the Lech sparkled as the sun completed its descent. Despite the lateness of the day, the three still had time to take in the charming town with its red tiled roofs. From its peaceful appearance, one would not likely guess that only a few months earlier, Landsberg am Lech had been the scene of a notorious concentration camp. Now the camp—barbed wire and all—served as a displaced persons facility.

Following Lara's directions, Jonathan drove to the edge of town where the houses were more dilapidated than in the neighborhoods near the bridge. Lara directed Jonathan to stop in front of a tawdry looking dwelling where a dim light shone through the window of the first-floor apartment. The three walked in and were immediately confronted by the smell of illness and the sight of two women.

One of the women got up from the beaten couch and greeted Lara in German. She excused herself after sympathetically whispering a few words into Lara's ear. The other woman—the object of Lara's concern—lay in the far corner of the room on a makeshift bed. The woman stared up at the far wall and said nothing. Only a racking cough caused her body to change position. Rothman did not have to examine her to assess her condition, but he went through the motions. He listened to the woman's chest and returned Lara and Jonathan's gaze with a sad shake of his head. The woman's lungs were filled with fluid and it was a miracle she could breath.

Rothman positioned the women's gaunt face so he could get a better look at her in the dim light and check her throat. As soon as he moved her face, he emitted an involuntary sound of surprise. The woman was very near death, but her eyes were unmistakable. They were Lara's eyes.

Rothman examined the woman further, but his opinion was unchanged. He shook his head again and motioned to Lara to come to the woman's bedside. Very softly so only Lara could hear, he whispered to her, "I'm sorry, my dear. Your mother is close to death." Lara winced involuntarily, then knelt down beside her mother. As she threw her arms around the barely breathing patient, she let out a deep wail and began to cry uncontrollably.

Rothman motioned for Jonathan to leave the room with him so Lara could have some privacy and so Jonathan and he could

talk. Jonathan was sad, but hadn't expected what Rothman said next. "I'm afraid I can only say this directly. That woman is Lara's mother. It looks like Lara and you have a lot of talking to do. I have to go back to the camp. I can cover for you if you want to stay. Her mother may not last through the night."

Chapter 22
Lara Amidst the Linen
August–September 1945

His thoughts in a swirl of emotion and unanswered questions, Jonathan replied softly that he would like to stay. He reentered the room just as Lara was rising from the bed where her mother lay. Dejection was written all over Lara's face. She wiped her tears, looked at Jonathan and asked if Rothman had gone.

Jonathan had not yet decided what he was going to say. He merely replied, "Yes. He's gone back to the barracks." Then, because he couldn't hold it in, he added, "He said this woman is your mother."

The explosion of tears from Lara's eyes again caught Jonathan off guard. He had been prepared to unleash an outpouring of fury at having been so badly deceived, but Lara's tears softened him. He sat down on the couch and placed his head in his hands. Lara hesitantly sat down next to him. "Jonathan, I'm going to lose my mother tonight. I don't want to lose you as well. It would kill me. What can I tell you?"

Lara sat only a few inches from Jonathan but at this moment, she might as well have been miles away. Almost mechanically, he asked, "What else don't I know about you? Is everything you have told me a lie? You must be German! What are you doing working at a DP camp?"

Lara got up, checked on her mother and, after pacing back and forth for a moment or two, began to speak. "I've lived in Germany since the beginning of the war. But I was born in Switzer-

land and have a Swiss passport. That's how I was able to land a job at the DP camp. If they'd known I was German, they would never have hired me."

"Do you come from around here?"

"No. My father was an officer for the German army in the First World War. After the war, he tried his hand working in Switzerland since that was the only German-speaking country that hadn't been ravaged by the fighting. I was born in Zurich shortly after my parents moved to Switzerland."

She hesitated, but continued.

"My father was not a great business success in Switzerland. When a relative offered to sell my father a farm just over the border in Austria, my father grabbed the opportunity. There, in a small town in the shadow of the Austrian Alps, my brother and I grew up."

"A brother!"

"He's gone."

Jonathan forced himself to express sympathy. "I'm sorry. How did it happen?"

"Thank you. I'll explain. Though my father did well on the farm, he lived a life of nostalgia. He longed for the days of great undertakings when he was an officer in the German army. When Hitler invaded Poland and my father was offered a commission, he decided to sell the farm and move all of us to Berlin where he could join his new regiment. My brother was of fighting age at the time. My mother begged my father to leave us in Austria or allow the family to return to Switzerland where my mother hoped my brother would escape military service. My father would hear nothing of my mother's pleas. By then, my father was a committed Nazi. He said that he could not abide a son who shirked his duty to serve the Reich. So, we moved to Berlin."

Despite his pain, Jonathan couldn't hide his concern and Lara readily grasped his need to know more.

"Both my father and my brother were at Stalingrad. My father was with the 4th Panzers and died during Stalin's counter-offensive in January 1943. My brother was fortunate enough to survive the hostilities, but he was taken prisoner and later died in a Russian prisoner of war camp during the harsh winter that followed the battle."

Jonathan was beginning to feel a small, but growing, measure of sympathy for the woman sitting next to him. "That's awful. What happened to your mother and you?"

"As was true of most German civilians, we did our best to survive. There was never enough to eat, but at least we had a roof over our heads in Berlin. As the war began to go badly for Hitler, conditions in Berlin deteriorated. There was hardly a building that hadn't been damaged by Allied bombing and artillery shells. The rationing became even more severe and many of our friends became ill from lack of food."

"So, what did you do?"

"In April of this year, when the Russians were practically within sight of Berlin, we knew it was all over. The last thing we wanted was to be in the path of the invading Russian army. We'd heard about how the Russian soldiers treated German women. By then, my mother was showing signs of illness and needed medical attention. We packed up what we could and headed south. Bavaria had not sustained as much damage as the industrial north and I hoped to find work there as a nurse. The trip was terrible. We hitched rides when we could, slept outside in the clothes we were wearing and ate scraps of food that others had thrown away. I didn't want to spend the little money we had because I knew I would need it to rent an apartment when we arrived."

Jonathan thought: *That's why Lara looked so gaunt when I first met her.* He was feeling genuine solicitude, but was still too hurt to do anything more than continue his questions. "Why on earth

did you look for work in a DP camp? Your family was made up of Nazis and you must have known that any DP camp would be full of Jews!"

Lara got up from the couch, tears again welling in her eyes. She composed herself and looked at Jonathan. "I said my father was a Nazi. Indeed, he was the worst kind of Nazi. I remember one time when we went to Wittenberg to visit relatives. They took us to the church where Martin Luther had preached. There, my relatives showed us a relief of a sculpture on one of the church walls. The sculpture, a *judensau*, depicted Jews sucking on the teats of a sow, while a rabbi looked under the sow's tail. Knowing that Jews abhorred pork, my father thought the sculpture was riotously funny. He laughed. I didn't think the sculpture was amusing at all. When I asked my father why he thought the depiction was so funny, he turned to me quite seriously and said, 'Sucking on the teat of a pig is too good for the Jews. They're not worthy of being in the same company as pigs.'"

Appalled by the story of Lara's father, Jonathan pressed on. "I'm afraid I was described in much the same way before we left Germany. But what your father said still doesn't explain why you chose to work at a DP camp."

Lara sat down again next to Jonathan. Plaintively, she continued. "You remember my telling you about working for the English family."

"Yes. I suppose that was made up as well."

"A small part of it was made up. The family did winter in the Austrian Alps. They did have a daughter with a facial disfigurement. I did work for them and accompany them to England. And they did take me in and did send me to nursing school after their daughter died."

"What was made up?" asked Jonathan, feeling a little better knowing there had been a substantial semblance of truth to the story.

"First, I was living in Austria, not Switzerland. Second, I did have to leave England, but not because people mistakenly believed my last name was German. I had to leave because my father insisted on it and because my last name was, in fact, of German origin."

Jonathan turned toward Lara so his face and hers were only a few inches from one another. "Those don't sound like very substantial departures from your story."

"Correct. But it is what I didn't tell you about the family that's important."

"What do you mean?" asked Jonathan, curiosity now written all over his face.

Tears again formed in Lara's eyes. She placed her hands onto Jonathan's shoulders; he did not resist. Then, removing her hands and placing them on either side of Jonathan's face, she gently brushed her lips against Jonathan's face. Again, he did not resist. Lara looked at the man she did not want to lose. With her face just inches from his, Lara said softly, almost imperceptibly, "The family was Jewish. I never told my father because the family treated me so kindly. Unlike my father, the family was neither judgmental nor bitter. They taught me all about Judaism and, for all of the years of the war, I've lived my own unspeakable hell under Hitler. I vowed that after the war I would do something to make amends. So, here I am working at a DP camp. I'm so sorry to have lied to you and do so much wish to make it up to you."

Jonathan barely heard her final words because he found himself kissing her, passionately, unabashedly and wholeheartedly. She was kissing him back. Her parted lips explored every feature of Jonathan's face as her eager tongue filled Jonathan with desire. All the while kissing back, Jonathan wrapped his arms around Lara and felt for her bra. He removed it easily and cupped his hands over Lara's small breasts. Her ribs jutted out from her ribcage, reminding Jonathan that she had still not fully recovered

from months of being undernourished. But the effect of Lara's taut nipples under his fingers filled Jonathan with a desire unlike anything he had ever known.

They kissed, their mouths open and hungry for whatever the other offered. Eagerly, Jonathan's hand reached down between Lara's thighs and he placed his hand under her panties. The sensation of finding her so wet filled him with even greater desire. She opened Jonathan's pants and began rubbing Jonathan's stiff penis, first slowly then more rapidly as she sensed Jonathan's heightening pleasure. Lara felt Jonathan arch at the same time she felt her own brain take over in a wave of orgasmic pleasure. Her lips still pressed on Jonathan's, Lara let out a wail of delight just as she felt Jonathan's liquid stream across her hand.

Their pleasure had been so great they had forgotten for the moment that they were in a house of impending death. They might have continued their lovemaking and suspended all thought of Lara's mother, except for a gruesome sound that came from her mother's throat. Still partially undressed and in need of communicating so many thoughts, Jonathan and Lara quickly jumped up and rushed to the doomed woman's side. Jonathan and Lara contemplated the full immensity of Lara's mother's circumstances as her breathing became more labored.

A foreboding filled the room and soon Lara's mother was gone. Her last few minutes had been anguished and heartbreaking. When it was clear her mother was no more, Lara threw herself on her mother's bed and wept the cry of the bereaved. At length, she picked herself up and covered her mother with a sheet. She looked up at Jonathan and placed her head on his welcoming shoulder, where she cried until she exhausted herself.

Jonathan gently placed Lara down on the couch where she fell asleep immediately. He found a chair for himself, but sleep was not easy. He didn't regret his actions that evening, even the lovemaking in the presence of Lara's mother. He was clearly

infatuated with Lara and nothing was going to change that. However, here he was, in the Nazi heartland, involved with a woman who not only was Christian but who also had been raised in a home where Jews had been reviled and dehumanized. What troubled him was that he didn't seem to care, so great was his affection for Lara. Still thinking about the craziness of his circumstances, Jonathan dozed off in the chair.

In the morning, Jonathan called Rothman. He asked if he could remain with Lara until after the funeral, and Rothman agreed. The funeral arrangements proved difficult, since Lara had little money and the local cemetery workers were operating at capacity. Lara's mother had few possessions that warranted keeping. In two days, Jonathan and Lara returned to camp. They had had little time to sort through the many concerns that occupied their thoughts.

At the end of Jonathan's first day back at work, Rothman asked Jonathan to remain. "I'm going to assume you know what you're doing. Going to Lara's mother's house was hardly the favor I owe you, so I want to do you a real favor. Do you know the auxiliary linen room we rarely use because it is so far from everything?"

"Yes," said Jonathan, wondering what the major had in mind.

"I checked it out. It has a window and there's still linen there. I told the quartermaster that I needed the room for medical supplies and he agreed. To make a long story short, it's yours. That is to say, it's Lara's and yours. Here's the key. Use it with discretion."

Not knowing what to say, Jonathan merely took the key and said, "Thank you."

"One more thing," said Rothman.

"Yes?"

"Have fun!"

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For Lara, the next few weeks were filled with emotional peaks and valleys as she reconciled herself to the loss of her mother and rejoiced in the realization she was in love. For Jonathan, the time with Lara was nothing short of unmitigated joy. Each day, the two would meet after their workday was done and spirit themselves to their love nest amidst the linen. The workbenches, when draped in folded sheets and towels, provided them with all the amenities required for lovemaking. And lovemaking they pursued, with unbridled passion.

Hungrily, they locked arms, legs, loins—anything that enabled them to be as one before returning to their assigned sleeping quarters. Lara was experienced and Jonathan delighted in the way she excited him. The two of them experimented with every form of sexual position their imaginations could muster and then sought even more ways to provide one another with pleasure. Lara was growing healthier by the day. Now when Jonathan moved his hands up her body to caress her tender breasts, he no longer felt the protruding ribs that had once filled him with concern.

When Lara kissed Jonathan, her tongue searched endlessly for new ways of making her man delight with desire. She found new techniques for bringing him almost to the point of climax, only to back off at the last moment as he writhed in exquisite pleasure. Her mouth held the key to a wondrous array of delights and when she used it to lick Jonathan, he went wild with delight.

Jonathan found ways of pleasing Lara that he never knew he possessed. His mouth became an instrument of sexual pleasure for Lara. As he moved his mouth from Lara's ankle toward her thigh, kissing her all the way, Lara's pleasure grew. Sometimes she climaxed even before Jonathan buried his searching tongue in the warmth of her quivering femininity.

As they kissed and fondled one another, it seemed as if the world was made for sexual pleasure. They hardly thought about

the predations of the war or the poor displaced souls who were now in their charge.

They were in love and would have to confront the many issues that separated them. Neither wanted that time to come any sooner than necessary. The time did come gradually, first with a casual question from Jonathan asking whether Lara missed her brother, then with an innocent question from Lara asking Jonathan how often he thought about his mother. The questions then became more involved—not meddling, just more difficult.

One evening, after their customary lovemaking, Jonathan asked Lara why she thought her father had been so determined in his hatred for Jews. Sitting in her underwear, Lara sighed. She had known a question like this would be coming. She had even rehearsed her answer. But when the actual question was posed, she was not sure what to say. Getting up from her perch on a pile of towels, she finally responded. "Jews have lived among Germans for the longest time. In 1870, Jews were emancipated and they forged ahead in almost all walks of life. Yet, for people like my father, the Jews were never true Germans. They were something else and it disturbed my father because he held to the view that Jews were deceitful and morally corrupt. My father found it intolerable that people who were something else could succeed in Austria and Germany where so many true Austrians and Germans had failed."

Jonathan didn't want to hurt Lara's feelings, but he had to ask. "Didn't your father consider that the Jews who succeeded may have done so because of talent and hard work?"

Lara was beginning to feel uncomfortable. She did her best to calm herself and answered in as offhand a tone as she could muster. "I'm sure he did consider that they had gotten where they were through hard work. But I'm afraid that may have infuriated him even more."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Jonathan, making sure his body language was not sending any unintended messages.

Lara picked up the cue and did her best to respond in a calm, measured manner. "For a person like my father, the Aryan race had achieved a level of accomplishment unmatched by any other society in history. He was a country farmer, but he read a lot and loved music. He worshipped the great German composers—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt and Wagner. He probably didn't fully understand them, but he read and never tired of quoting the great German philosophers such as Kant, Hagel and Schopenhauer. His favorite authors and poets were all German—Goethe, Schiller and Nietzsche—and he marveled at the accomplishments of German scientists and mathematicians. For my father, German society did not merely merit pride. It required constant vigilance to protect it from any degenerate forces that might undercut it."

"And those forces, as he saw it, were the Jews?"

"I'm afraid so," said Lara, her eyes betraying the dread she was feeling.

"What did he think about German Jewish composers such as Felix Mendelssohn, Ernest Bloch and Gustav Mahler, of German Jewish writers such as Heinrich Heine, and of German Jewish scientists such as Max Borne, Hans Bethe, Albert Einstein, and an endless array of additional figures, many of whom taught with my father at the University of Hamburg?"

"I have no good answer to that question. I suppose he would have said that accomplished people like the ones you mentioned were not Germans but persons bent on insinuating themselves into German life."

"To what end did he think they were insinuating themselves, as you put it?"

"To the end of diluting German society and destroying German life. He constantly railed against Jews taking over all walks

of life and often warned that the day Jews controlled the banks would be the day they placed their boots on our throats."

"How can that be when Jews made so many contributions to German culture?"

Lara was now practically in tears. "I wish I could say more, but I can't."

Normally sensitive to Lara's needs, Jonathan's dissatisfaction with her answers prevented him from seeing the look of desperation in her eyes and he forged on. "What would move your father or any Nazi to conclude the only way to smother Jewish success was to slaughter every last Jew in Europe, even those who did not live in traditional Germanic areas?"

Now, Lara was indeed crying. She looked at Jonathan imploringly and Jonathan realized how far he had pushed this woman he loved. "I'm so sorry for making you feel uncomfortable. It's just that the barbarism of the Nazi regime is so enormous, I keep looking for answers."

Lara looked into Jonathan's eyes hoping to find understanding, if not acceptance. "I've tried to explain my father's thinking as best as I could. I think it's important to understand his views were not new. They were as old as the church I told you about—Martin Luther's church—with the *judensau* motif sculpted on its wall."

"Yes, I've been thinking about that church ever since you mentioned it."

"As a nurse, I've always tried to conduct myself as a good Christian. I believe most Germans also think that way. We've always been a culture that credited our achievements to what we saw as certain universal virtues. One way or another, these virtues all reduced themselves to a love of Christ. Jews made us feel uncomfortable because they did not believe in Christ and, therefore, could not be virtuous. Even worse, as we were taught from the time we were in kindergarten, the Jews killed Christ. So, seeing

Jews grow in both numbers and success posed a threat to people like my father who viewed them as morally base and theologically corrupt. As he saw it, the only way of keeping society immune from such a threat was to snuff it out."

Lara sat down again, head buried in her hands. Jonathan walked over to her and raised her hands to his mouth and kissed them. "My dearest, I've seen the same kind of prejudice in America and in England. But in those places, people no longer kill Jews just because they don't embrace Christ. They certainly don't kill Jews in the millions for their beliefs, no matter how discredited those views are thought to be."

Lara's eyes were downcast. She spoke fearfully. "I'm so sad you're upset."

"I'm not upset," replied Jonathan unconvincingly. Tenderly, he took Lara's hands in his and gently began kissing her fingers.

The feel of Jonathan's lips on her fingers imbued Lara with new strength, and she felt better about continuing the conversation. "I wish that none of the Jews of Europe had been slaughtered. But I can't bring them back."

"I understand," said Jonathan, content to let the matter rest.

Almost as if she were thinking out loud, Laura lamented, "If the Jews had just agreed to live as Christians, the whole thing could have been averted. How hard would it have been for Jews to believe in Jesus or say they were Christians, even if they didn't mean it?"

The question struck Jonathan as both misguided and earnest. It might easily have shattered the quiet of the moment, but for the fact that Jonathan remembered an earlier more naïve version of himself asking a rabbi the same question when he was at Kibbutz Ramah Gan in Palestine. Jonathan allowed his mind to wander briefly, remembering the sweetness and innocence of his days on the kibbutz. He turned to Lara, whose face now showed fear at the possibility she had gone too far with her question.

"The question is fair. You shouldn't feel self-conscious in having asked it, but it's hard to answer. The plight of the Jews has never been easy and has never lent itself to simple acceptance of Jesus. I know many wonderful things are attributed to him. I understand his teachings shook the establishment of the day. But, so did the teachings of a lot of rabbis. Like Jesus, they, too, were scornful of the world of sin they encountered and, like Jesus, they preached the arrival of a new world order where sin would be eradicated."

"I guess I understand, but what are you getting at?"

"After Jesus died on the cross, his followers sought insights into why the Son of God had been made to die. The explanation that found acceptance was that Jesus had died to absolve mankind of its sins and that salvation would come only through a belief in Jesus' sacrifice. For the Jews of the day, as corrupt and unenviable as that era may have been, such a view went against the grain of 1,500 years of teachings from the *Torah*, the Jewish bible. The *Torah* was thought to have been endowed by God and to provide salvation to those who followed its teachings by leading a moral life."

Lara was trying to absorb what Jonathan had said and assess her reactions. For a few moments, they were both still. Then Lara looked up at Jonathan, her face signaling acceptance if not full understanding. "It's hard for me to comprehend everything you've said because I'm not Jewish. The atrocities that have taken place against the Jews have been terrible, and I'm trying to do my part to make amends. Despite what has happened, I believe there are plenty of good people in the world and a lot of them are Christian. But, right now, none of their views matter because the only person in whom I want to place my faith is you."

Jonathan was touched in a way he could not have imagined before Lara spoke. He dropped to his knees, tears streaming from his eyes. Lara lowered herself to the floor so she could embrace

her man. They made love where they knelt and then returned to their barracks.

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Over the next few weeks, Jonathan and Lara managed to put behind them their awkward discussion about Christian attitudes toward the Jews. They focused on learning more about one another and finding ways of making each other happy. Not that their lovemaking didn't continue; it did. But equally interesting were discoveries about one another's past. No topic was too trivial and no event too uninteresting.

Jonathan marveled at Lara's story about the time an avalanche wiped out the ski trail that Lara and her friends intended to use to get down a mountain, and how they had been forced to walk in deep snow using their skis as poles until a search party found them. Lara loved hearing about how Jonathan and Charlie had met during their adolescent explorations aboard the ship from Hamburg to London. She also loved hearing about Anton and his remarkable career from academic to intelligence officer.

Their relationship was destined to blossom into a love for all time. Their way of addressing one another became more intimate and endearing. Their hideaway among the linen was feeling more like a home, despite its austere offerings. They were deeply in love, and nothing stood in their way.

While Jonathan's relationship with Lara was growing, his desire to return to medical school had also grown. With the encouragement of Rothman, Jonathan had applied to Tufts University Medical School in Boston. Rothman had rallied his Tufts colleagues to mount a campaign on Jonathan's behalf.

In addition, Jonathan had stayed in touch with Adam Goldfarb from his pledge days. Adam had completed his medical studies before enlisting and now that the war was over, he was in a residency program preparing to enter his father's Boston surgical practice. When Jonathan wrote to Adam telling him of the exploit

that had earned him a bronze star and letting him know about his interest in attending Tufts, Adam told his father. The elder Goldfarb was taken with the idea of Jonathan being a war hero. Though Goldfarb had gone to Cornell Medical School, he nevertheless enjoyed substantial influence in the Boston medical community and went to work on Jonathan's behalf.

One afternoon late in October one of Jonathan's friends who had been to mail call placed two letters on Jonathan's bunk. One of the letters was from Charlie's parents and the other was from Tufts University Medical School. When Jonathan returned to the barracks after work, he found the letters.

He couldn't quite get himself to open the Tufts letter. He opened the letter from Saundra and Giles and was delighted to read that the Brodys had succeeded in obtaining entry visas for their niece and nephew, Sarah and Werner Kreisler, and that the two of them had arrived in England and were living with Saundra and Giles. The letter also advised that Agatha and Lorenz had decided to return to Germany where they hoped to help rebuild the country. In particular, Lorenz was reluctant to move to England because of the country's understandable antipathy toward anyone with German roots, even when the person was a German refugee. Instead, Lorenz felt that, as a civil engineer, he would be able to make a significant contribution to the Herculean reconstruction work that confronted the vanquished German people.

Jonathan turned his attention to the letter from Tufts. He shouldn't have been nervous. After all, he had done well at UCLA and had more than three years of combat medical experience under his belt. But, nervous he was. Hesitatingly, he looked at the letter. Finally, he resolved to open it. The words jumped out at him as welcomingly as an embrace from his dear Lara:

> We are pleased to admit you as a student to the Tufts University School of Medicine, commencing September 1946. Due to your ex-

> tensive combat medical experience and the strength of your references, the faculty of the Medical School has decided to waive that part of your second year of medical school you were unable to complete at UCLA. Instead, you will be admitted as a third-year medical student and will immediately start your third-year rotations upon your matriculation in September. Congratulations, and please accept our admiration for the service you have rendered to your country.

Jonathan's thoughts immediately turned to Lara, with whom he was enthusiastically resolved to share his future. She was on duty until later in the evening, when they would rendezvous at the linen closet. Jonathan couldn't wait to relay his good news to her, but he passed the time by seeking out Rothman. Rothman was ecstatic and insisted on toasting Jonathan at a nearby pub. The conversation at the pub was celebratory. Rothman told Jonathan he'd been looking forward to this day as the first step toward an eventual medical partnership with Jonathan. Jonathan could not have been more delighted and allowed the drinks to come and the celebration to continue later into the evening than he had intended.

When Jonathan finally made it to the linen closet, he found a worried Lara waiting for him. She noted Jonathan's tipsy condition and smelled the alcohol on his breath. "Where have you been?" she asked, irritably.

"Please, my darling, don't be mad at me. I've been celebrating with Rothman as a preliminary to celebrating with you."

"What do you mean?" she asked, her irritability replaced with curiosity.

"I mean that I've just seen the roadmap to my future."

"Please, Jonathan, you sometimes have a tendency to be oblique."

"I just received a letter from Tufts University in Boston admitting me to medical school as a third-year student, starting next September."

"That's wonderful," said Lara. Not wanting to ask what was really on her mind, she temporized. "Have you ever been to Boston?"

"Yes. When I was in college, I played soccer—I mean football—against Harvard in Boston on two occasions."

Having more difficulty concealing the concern creeping over her face, Lara continued. "Harvard is in Boston?"

"Yes, it is. Why the glum look?"

"Oh, Jonathan. I knew something like this was going to happen. We are from such different worlds. It was ordained that one day our time together would have to end and I'd resolved myself to accept such an end. Nevertheless, now that I hear your words and think about our separation..."

"My darling, I've been so unfeeling in broaching my good news this way. Who said that we're going to be separated?"

Her face brightening, Lara asked hopefully, "What do you mean?"

Taking Lara in his arms, Jonathan looked into the eyes of his beloved and replied tenderly, "I mean that when I leave here, I want you to come with me."

"Don't you think that would be awkward?" Lara asked in a concerned but still hopeful manner.

"It would be if you came as Lara Hoetschl, but not if you came as Lara Sternbloom."

Lara looked into Jonathan's eyes and saw only love. She had not dared to think of this moment. Now that it was here, she did not know what to say. All she could do was ask haltingly, "Do you really mean it?"

"Of course, I mean it," said Jonathan. I didn't know how much I meant it until I received my letter of acceptance from

Tufts this afternoon. I knew that I couldn't leave for Boston without you. Lara, I don't have a ring to give you. But I do have something as dear."

Jonathan reached under his shirt and unclasped the chain on which his grandfather's star hung. Lara had seen the star many times and knew it had great meaning for Jonathan because it had come from his mother. She looked at Jonathan, almost transfixed, as he took off the star. As if in a dream, she watched as he then put the star around her neck.

"Lara, this is my most proud possession. It's filled with meaning. I would part with it only for the most important reason. You are that reason. Lara Hoetschl, will you wear my Star of David and will you become my wife?"

Lara placed her head on Jonathan's shoulder and sobbed uncontrollably. Jonathan lifted Lara's chin so that her tear-filled eyes would lock with his. "Lara, I would do anything for you. Please be my wife and live with me until we die."

Lara looked at her lover, kissed him gently and replied, "Of course I will. I love the star and I love you. Three months ago, I was a refugee with a dying mother. Today, I'm engaged. I'm so overwhelmed, my love. I, too, would do anything for you, no matter the cost to me." The two of them embraced, and the lovemaking that night was more joyous than anything they had previously experienced.

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The hour was late when they had exhausted themselves in passion. They stayed in the linen room, hoping they would not be missed at their regular sleeping quarters. Jonathan had never been so happy, and fell asleep instantly.

Lara, too, fell into a deep sleep. But in the early hours of the morning, she woke with a start. A debate of great consequence was taking place in her mind. She unreservedly loved the sleeping man next to her, and she longed to be with him in Boston or

anywhere. However, her thoughts kept coming back to the discussions they had about the bestiality of her fellow Germans—the unavoidable realization that men like her father had been complicit in the slaughter of Jonathan's people.

Lara knew that Jonathan didn't associate her with the acts of her father or blame her for the crimes of the German people in their zeal to murder every Jew in Europe. But would that last forever? Would there be a moment of weakness in Jonathan's life when he would lower his emotional guard and feel resentment toward Lara? And what of Jonathan's friends and colleagues? How would they feel about Jonathan being married to a Nazi? What would her life be like in America, knowing she would be a pariah? How could she look her husband in the eye knowing he would constantly be on the defensive, having to justify the improbable marriage he had made?

She looked adoringly at her sleeping lover as she went over her concerns in her mind. How could it work? She was the daughter of a Nazi. Her father and brother had fought for the Reich. Her mother, though a loving woman, had harbored little affection for the Jews of Germany and Lara had little doubt that, if pressed, her mother would have sided with her father.

Lara did her best to think about the joy that would come from being with Jonathan for the rest of her life. But each time she thought she had quieted her reservations, more sprang up. She knew she had to make a decision and she did. Quietly, Lara got out of bed, slipped on her clothes and left.

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When Jonathan awoke to an empty bed, he hoped Lara had felt the need to leave for work and did not want to disturb her sleeping man. But in his heart of hearts, Jonathan suspected the worst. He rushed to the nurses' residence where Lara lived and sought out the head resident. She told Jonathan that Lara had been there for a short time that night but that she had left, saying

there was a family emergency. Jonathan asked if Lara had left anything to indicate where she had gone.

The head nurse said that Lara had not given any indication of her destination, but that she had left a sealed envelope with Jonathan's name on it. She gave Jonathan the envelope. Jonathan sat down in a corner, opened the envelope and began to read from the single handwritten sheet that comprised its contents. What he read filled him with so great a sense of emptiness that he lacked the capacity to cry, as much as he wished he could.

My dearest Jonathan,

I wish I could express the love I feel for you in the few words I am about to write. But words cannot possibly convey how dear you are to me and how much you have transformed my life these past months. I have never known such joy and contentment and know I never will again. I cherish the star you gave me and will keep it always. But that is the only part of you I will keep, for I now leave you forever.

Jonathan, were I to go with you to America, people would always be second guessing you for marrying the daughter of a Nazi. Over time, the views and insinuations of your friends and colleagues might even cause you to question your own judgment. Even if you never stopped standing up for me, you would always be forced to keep your guard raised.

What kind of a life would that be for you? I can't bear the thought of people talking behind your back and making snide remarks because of me. The idea that you would always be on the defensive fills me with untold sadness—so much so that it eclipses the sadness I feel at the thought of losing you.

I have learned so much about Judaism from you and from my English family. I love that

you are Jewish and I admire the gentleness of your faith. A few weeks ago, I tried to explain the hostility that led my fellow Germans to commit such heinous acts of depravity toward your people. But the truth is, I really don't understand. Having known and loved you, I wish I were Jewish. But I am not. I carry the burden of being a German Christian. I do not want to add to that burden by complicating your life or by causing you to be the subject of ridicule or contempt. So, my love, in these few poorly expressed words, I must say goodbye.

I wish you love and success in all that you do.

Your loving Lara

After reading the letter, Jonathan searched for Lara. But she had vanished almost as mysteriously as she had first appeared. When he realized his quest was in vain, he turned to self-pity and despair.

Jonathan showed up for work and did his part, but his actions were more those of an automaton than a thinking, feeling person. He made no mistakes of consequence, but the spontaneity that had made Jonathan's work so valuable to Rothman had disappeared. Rothman felt he had to clear the air. The UN was about to take over the camp. Rothman had requested to stay for the remaining eight-month duration of his tour of duty to help with the transition. He wanted Jonathan, who also had eight months remaining on his tour of duty, to stay with him. However, given the recent change in Jonathan's mood and manner, Rothman was concerned that Jonathan might not be able to handle the hard work ahead.

On a Friday morning several weeks later, the matter came to a head when, uncharacteristically, Jonathan was late for work for the second time that week. Rothman had a full schedule that

morning and Jonathan's tardiness threatened to create a backlog with the possibility that some surgeries—all of which were pressing—might have to be postponed. When Jonathan arrived, Rothman blew up. "Damn it. You've been acting like a scorned lover for several weeks now. I've tolerated it because I know how hard you've taken the loss of Lara. However, when your behavior threatens the well-being of my patients, I have to put my foot down. You've never been late in the past. Now you've been late two times this very week. What the hell is going on?"

Meekly, Jonathan could only muster an oblique reply. "I had trouble sleeping last night."

"You mean, you were lying in your bed wallowing in self-pity, thinking about Lara. Well, snap out of it or I'm likely to reconsider the glowing recommendation I sent to Tufts. I know it's hard, but you're not the first guy to have been jilted by a woman. And you must know in your heart of hearts that it was never intended to be. I admit that I helped facilitate things, but not because I thought it was going to work. On the contrary, I had grave reservations. But you seemed smitten and I owed you so much that I wanted to make you happy."

Jonathan allowed a half-hearted smile to creep on to his face.

"You've got a great career ahead of you and, as I told you, I'm looking forward to calling you partner one day. But you've got to get hold of yourself. Go out and get drunk. Find a whore. Do something. Just don't spend your days and nights moping and feeling sorry for yourself. Tell you what: After work tonight, let's go to town and get smashed. There's nothing scheduled tomorrow, so we'll be fine. You can talk about Lara if you want. By the end of the evening I want you to put her behind you, even if you have to fake it. Understood?"

That night, Rothman requisitioned a car and the two of them headed for the Weisswurst Inn, where they gorged themselves on white veal sausage, the delicacy of the area, black bread,

sauerkraut and strong German beer. By the end of the evening, the two of them were singing outlandish army songs and, in the process, driving away some of the tavern's regulars.

When they returned to the DP camp, both men passed out in Rothman's quarters. After a long and deep sleep, Jonathan woke up to find a smiling Rothman looking down on him. "Did you eat and drink enough last night, or do you need a stronger antidote?"

Jonathan rubbed his eyes and replied, "I may not be there yet, but I'm going to make it work."

Jonathan was never fully able to get Lara out of his mind but every day, he found some means of distracting himself. His enthusiasm for work came back and his ability to sleep returned. There was no getting away from the fact he felt pain, but it was beginning to ebb. He still could not fully understand what had happened. Whatever it was, he began to recognize it was out of his control. Gradually, still hurting, he looked toward the future.

Chapter 23
In England, a Joyful Reunion
May–July 1946

The spring of 1946 had arrived in Bavaria and the noble Edelweiss, with its star-shaped flowers, was in bloom everywhere. In the mountains, where Jonathan had taken to hiking on weekends, cyclamen in shades of gentle pink and rich red bordered the walking paths. Alpine roses in hues of pink and mauve lit up the meadows, punctuated by the yellow blossoms of three-foot high cornflowers.

Everywhere there was a sense of renewal. The people in the towns and villages felt it as they scrambled to rebuild businesses decimated by the war. The farmers felt it as they sought to replenish herds that had been winnowed down by military appropriations. And Jonathan felt it as he hiked his favorite mountain paths. Lara was still in his thoughts, but less so. He was looking forward to his return to America in two months and the resumption of medical school in the fall.

Jonathan had been thinking it would be fun to visit the Brodys for a while and it would be cleansing to visit his father's grave. He was thinking about how to engineer such a visit as he checked his mail cubicle early in May. There, to his delight, he saw a letter from Giles and Saundra. He had received a few letters from them over the past few months and had written back, but the coincidence of receiving a letter from them just as he was thinking about a visit made this letter seem special.

Jonathan tore open the envelope and began to read. He smiled as he read because the letter ensured that Jonathan would be visiting England before he returned to America. This is what it said:

Dear Jonathan:

We hope this letter finds you doing well. We are quite well and have some exciting news. As we told you a while back, our nephew and niece, Werner and Sarah Kreisler, decided to leave Sweden and move to England with us. They have been with us for almost eight months and have been doing very well adjusting to their new home. For us it has been a delight since, as you well know, both boys are in California.

Both Werner and Sarah have been taking courses at your father's old school, UCL, to supplement the programs they started in Denmark and Sweden, and both are on track to receive bachelor's degrees. Our house has been a beehive of activity, just like the old days. In fact, even more so!

You no doubt remember your father's dear friend and colleague, Alex Braxton, who recently passed away. Alex's daughter, Gwen, had been studying Judaism since discovering she was of Jewish ancestry. Upon completing her studies at Oxford last summer, Gwen gave herself a graduation present in honor of her father and formally converted to Judaism. Ever since that time, she has been a frequent visitor to our house and has often stayed over on weekends.

Well, you know what happens when boys and girls are in close proximity to one another. Invariably, romance appears and that is exactly what has happened to Gwen and Werner. They are hopelessly and madly in love with one another and have set a wedding date for the end of next month. There's more: they want you to be at their wedding. Werner has warm remembrances of you from the time Charlie and you visited the Kreislers in Denmark. Gwen has never met you, but she remembers the high esteem in which her

father held your family. Also, neither Randy nor Charlie is going to be able to attend the wedding because of babies and the difficulty of finding transport from California to England. But conveniently, you are right here in Europe.

There's one more thing. Gwen and Werner want to go to Palestine for their honeymoon. They both think it would be a fitting end to Gwen's Jewish studies. We are arranging for Werner to become an English citizen as soon as he is married so he and Gwen can get passports. There shouldn't be a problem since Werner's mother is English and since Gwen's father was so well known. The two of them are even talking about using their honeymoon visit to decide whether they want to stay in Palestine.

As English citizens, they should be able to make the trip without running afoul of this country's accursed policy toward the Jews of Eastern Europe who also wish to go to Palestine. Here is where you come in again. While in Palestine, they want to visit the kibbutz where you stayed when you were younger. They want to learn all about it from you so they will know what to expect.

That's it. We really hope you can come to the wedding. It will be so good to see you after all these years and I think it will be good for you to be back on British soil so you can have some form of closure with your father and Vanessa. What do you say?

Love, Giles and Saundra

Jonathan continued to smile as he finished the letter. His immediate reaction to the invitation was unqualified happiness. *It would be so good to be back in England*, he thought, *particularly for so happy an event and also to reflect on father and Vanessa. And*, he

thought, *it will be great fun to the chance to reminisce about my days on the kibbutz*. Jonathan had been reading about the restrictions the English government had placed on Jewish emigration to Palestine and he was happy Werner and Gwen would have an opportunity to go there without impediment. Jonathan was disappointed that Charlie wouldn't be at the wedding. But he figured it was all for the best since, if Charlie came, then Randy and Leslie might also come. While Leslie was hardly in Jonathan's thoughts, particularly after Lara, he was glad he wouldn't have to put up with any awkwardness while he was in England.

Jonathan responded immediately, thanking Giles and Saundra, and baring his soul over the wearying effects of the war and the emotionally draining circumstances of the DP camp and his affair with Lara. The next day, Jonathan sought out Rothman's help in arranging for a two-week leave of absence before the two of them headed back to the States and decommissioning. Jonathan had thought about the route he would take and had decided he would take the train north to Hamburg and then take a freighter from there to London. It had been half a lifetime ago that he had last seen Hamburg and he was eager to return to the city of his formative years.

With a two-week leave in hand, Jonathan headed for the train. He was aghast at the destruction he encountered along the way, particularly as he traveled through some of the more industrialized areas. But none of what he observed prepared him adequately for the devastation in Hamburg.

Jonathan knew Hamburg had been targeted because of its shipyards, port facilities and nearby refineries, but he was unaware of the extent of the Allied bombing and of the devastation it had wrought. Only after surveying the war-torn city was he able to fathom the fiery effects of relentless Allied aerial assaults. During the dry summer heat of 1943, British and American bombing runs had created so much combustion that on one occasion, they pro-

duced a column of fire more than 1,500 feet high. In the aftermath, as Jonathan observed, whole sections of the city had been destroyed.

Fortunately, the university area had been spared and so had the neighborhood where he had grown up. Elsewhere in the city, the destruction was almost beyond comprehension. Jonathan tried to reconstruct his childhood by walking through the city, but the devastation made it difficult for him to focus on anything other than the barren scenes before him. All around, the people looked aimless and broken.

Jonathan tried to look up his parents and his friends. After two days of fruitlessly trying to locate old acquaintances, he decided that he had had enough and booked the first freighter he could find that was bound for England. Before long, he was on the upper deck of the ship, reminiscing about the first time he had set sail for England. Recollections of his first encounter with Charlie made him laugh. Then Jonathan's mood became downcast as he thought about his father's death in the harsh Libyan desert and his mother's murder in some even more God forsaken place.

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In due course, Jonathan's ship docked and he was once again in England. As he worked his way down the gangway, wearing the uniform of a United States Army corporal and carrying a duffle bag, he saw five people waiving at him. He easily made out the figures of Giles and Saundra. But, the other three! Could the handsome young man of about 21 be Werner Kreisler, the boy of no more than 13 when he had last seen him? And the attractive young woman by Werner's side: *She must be Gwen Braxton*, thought Jonathan. *I'm happy Werner has found such a pretty girl.*

It was the fifth member of the welcoming party—Sarah Kreisler—who really grabbed Jonathan's attention. Even in his emotionally wounded state, Jonathan could see that Sarah Kreisler, at 23, was a beauty. Thought Jonathan, *I wish I were ready*

because any sane man would be a fool not to notice so lovely a creature. However, he was forced to dismiss the thought because he was now at the foot of the gangway and his welcoming party was rushing toward him and screaming his name.

Werner and Gwen were the first to reach Jonathan, followed by Giles and Saundra. They crowded around Jonathan in a collective embrace. Even Gwen, who had never met Jonathan, threw her arms around him. Only Sarah held back. But seeing that the others were now waiting for her to greet Jonathan, she unhurriedly strode up to him, gently placed her arms around his neck and hugged him politely. It was not much of a hug, but it was enough. Jonathan couldn't decide what to do or how to react to the warm feeling that had come over him. The need for decision was cut off as Sarah removed her arms and curtsied coyly. "Well, Corporal Sternbloom," she said. "It seems you are just in time for a wedding."

At this, everyone laughed and asked Jonathan questions about his service in Europe, how he earned his bronze star, what he remembered of his time on the kibbutz and what he planned on doing upon his return to the United States. The questioning continued as the six of them squeezed into the Brody's car. By the time they reached Giles' and Saundra's house, Jonathan was feeling both hoarse and tired. But there would be no let up. The wedding was just four days away. Guests would soon be arriving and preparations would be underway. Like it or not, Jonathan was already an integral part of the forthcoming ceremony.

Finally, a quiet moment arrived the next day. Gwen and Sarah were busy trying on clothes. Giles was at work and Saundra needed a few ingredients for the cake she was baking for the wedding. Saundra asked Jonathan and Werner to take the car and go into town for the needed items. Jonathan was happy to have the opportunity to talk to Werner about Palestine. Werner asked a few perfunctory questions about *Kibbutz Ramah Gan* and Jonathan

answered the questions forthrightly. However, it was clear Werner had something else on his mind. Along the way, Werner opened up to Jonathan and presented him with a surprise request. "You know," said Werner, "Charlie and Randy are not going to be at the wedding."

"Yes. Your uncle and aunt told me that in the letter they sent."

"I've been so busy completing my degree at UCL that I've had little time to make friends. Also, nobody I know from Demark or Sweden is coming to the wedding. So, you're the only male of my generation who is going to be there."

"I'm happy to perform that role," said Jonathan, reassuringly.

"The thing is," said Werner, "I'm going to need a best man. Ever since you visited my family in Denmark and brought me that Cornell pennant, I've felt attached to you. I know it's silly, but I almost think of you as a big brother. So, I was wondering if you would be my best man. You won't need any special clothing. Your uniform will be just fine."

Jonathan was truly surprised by this request. He had not thought that much about Werner since his one and only visit to the Kreislers so many years ago, but he didn't want to disappoint Werner. Jonathan agreed to serve as Werner's best man.

That evening, the family got together to talk about the wedding and Gwen and Werner's honeymoon plans. Since Stanley Marcus, Gwen's spiritual adviser, would be officiating at the wedding, Giles and Saundra had invited the rabbi to join them for dinner. Except for Sarah, who was taking a late nap, everyone was in the Brody's living room when Rabbi Marcus arrived.

Stanley let out a hoop and a holler as soon as he saw Jonathan, and the two embraced one another. Finally, they separated and a sober aspect washed over Stanley's face. "I'm so sad about your father. He was a great man. I don't think I've ever known anyone who displayed the versatility he did. But this is a happy occasion because my star pupil has found herself a fine Jewish man to marry and

because you're here. Let's hear about some of your travels and then we'll get down to the business of planning the wedding."

"Thank you. My father was away a lot when I was young because of the far-off places where he did his fieldwork. I resented it. It took me a while to discover the greatness of the man, but I did finally catch on. He gave everything he had, no matter the difficulty of the task. Even more importantly, when he succeeded, he did it with humility. He dedicated himself to the people around him and he died with an untarnished reputation. I miss him very much and I would like to visit his grave while I'm here."

"Well spoken," interjected Giles. "I can vouch for everything you just said. But, as Stanley pointed out, we would like to hear from you and then do a little wedding planning." Respectfully, Jonathan talked about life at Cornell. Just as he was describing the highs and lows of fraternity life, Sarah walked into the room wearing the white boat neck Cornell sweater with the large red C that Jonathan had given her years earlier. It was a cool night, so Jonathan was not surprised that Sarah was wearing a sweater. But to see her wearing that sweater, her blonde curls spilling over the sweater's scooped neck, almost took his breath away. She was a stunning young woman.

"I didn't mean to interrupt," said Sarah gaily. "Please continue. I don't know much about fraternity life in America."

Jonathan obliged her and continued his description of fraternity life on the American college campus. He then spoke of studying at UCLA, his decision to join the military, the tedium of having to wait before being shipped overseas, the horrors of war, and the work he had been doing at the DP camp. He hoped he was making sense, because he could not keep his mind off Sarah and the sweater. He did not know what to make of it. For so long, he had been mired in sadness over the loss of Lara. Now, this!

At length, Jonathan finished and everyone applauded. He walked over to Sarah sheepishly and told her how nice she looked

in the sweater he had given her and how surprised he was she had kept it. "Don't be silly," she replied. "It's my prized possession. It comforted me during all of the troubled time we lived in Denmark, it kept me warm the night we crossed the straight to Sweden and, remarkably, it has even kept me warm in this country that never seems to have a let up of rain." With that, Saundra announced dinner was on the table.

Over dinner, the talk of the wedding quickly gave way to talk of Palestine. Jonathan asked Stanley if he had heard from Chaim Goldston, the rabbi of *Kibbutz Ramah Gan* and Jonathan's spiritual mentor while he was in Palestine as a teenager. Stanley replied that he had been in touch with Chaim from time to time over the years and that Chaim had indeed remained rabbi of *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*, which now had three satellite *kibbutzim*. Stanley also said he had written Chaim a few weeks ago to let him know of Gwen and Werner's forthcoming arrival.

Gwen knew Stanley had tried to reach Chaim, but didn't know whether there had been any contact. Apprehensively, she asked, "Have you heard back from Rabbi Goldston?"

"Yes," replied Stanley. "I was going to surprise you. Just yesterday, I heard back from him."

"Please don't keep us in suspense. What did he say?"

"He is very excited that Werner and you are coming for a visit. He will have a place for you to stay at the *kibbutz* as soon as you arrive." Looking at Jonathan, Stanley continued. "He also asked about you. I had told him in my letter of your father's passing and he conveyed his condolences."

"Is that all he said?" asked Werner, disappointed at the terseness of Stanley's description of the letter.

"No, of course not! He emphasized how important a time in Jewish history the two of you will encounter in Palestine. Throughout the land, there is speculation that the days of the British Mandate will be coming to a conclusion. Already, the Jewish Agency

governs most of the Jewish population of Palestine. In the minds of the people of the *Yishuv*, as the Jews of Palestine call themselves, all that separates them from having their own state—the first in almost 2,000 years of exile—is the presence of the British."

"The Arabs will never stand for that," injected Giles. "Didn't they stage huge riots against the Jews in the late 1930s because they were so resentful of the Jewish influence in Palestine? And, my God, consider Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and one of Hitler's collaborators! The wretch even recruited Muslims to serve in the SS! His followers will fight to the death before submitting to a Jewish state."

"You are right on both counts and Chaim would second both of your concerns. He says that the Jews of the *Yishuv* have been planning in expectation of Arab hostilities when the British leave. Already, despite the British military in the country, the Jews look to their own informal army, the *Haganah*, for protection. As refugees trickle into the country, the *Haganah* is recruiting more men and women into its ranks in anticipation of the day when they might have to fight to hold on to their land."

"It sounds awfully tense," suggested Saundra nervously. "Is it prudent for the children to be going there?"

"The Amalfi Coast of Italy, it's not," said Stanley, hoping to tone down the concern being expressed by Saundra. "But Chaim says that there is no need for Gwen and Werner to be nervous, since they will be traveling under British passports. Chaim will make sure they are properly escorted around the country the entire time they are there."

"I guess we're lucky to have passports and visas," replied Gwen. Addressing herself to Stanley, she continued. "After studying with you for so long and happily affirming my ancestral Jewishness, I so want to be able to visit the land of my people."

"It is, indeed, lucky you have documentation," replied Stanley. "Our government doesn't want the displaced Jews of Europe

flooding Palestine. Such an outpouring would surely alienate the Arabs, which is the last thing our Foreign Service lads want to see. But Chaim emphasized that, from the perspective of His Majesty's government, the two of you will be in Palestine as British citizens. There should be no bureaucratic trouble once you arrive. And the escort Chaim will provide should keep you out of any other type of trouble."

"Okay," said Giles. "With that out of the way, I propose a toast to the future Mrs. Werner Kreisler." Happily, the celebrants stood up and raised their glasses in a hearty salute to the woman who had already become one of their own as a Jew, and who would soon become one of their own as a member of the family.

Chapter 24
One Celebration Begets Another
July 1946

The following day, a Friday, Agatha and Lorenz Kreisler arrived from Germany. After checking into their nearby hotel, they came to the Brody's home. Agatha and Lorenz rejoiced in seeing their children, in meeting Gwen and in seeing Saundra, Giles and Jonathan again.

When the hugging was over, Lorenz took Jonathan to a quiet spot and expressed his sadness over the loss of Jonathan's father. Lorenz wanted Jonathan to know how much he had admired Anton. Jonathan replied that the admiration was mutual. With equal sensitivity, Lorenz found Gwen and expressed his sadness over the loss of her father. They hugged again and then rejoined the others.

The Kreislers had traveled overland through France and their tale of devastation in the northern French precincts was as bad as the destruction Jonathan had observed in Germany. The Kreislers were excited about their son's wedding and were effusive in welcoming Gwen into the family. But the sadness in both Agatha's and Lorenz's eyes was palpable—so much so that they were immediately deluged with questions about life in Germany. The story they told was as sad as their expressions.

They related how everywhere in Germany, people looked defeated not only because of the military defeat, but also because their way of life was in shambles. Food was in short supply, construction equipment was in even shorter supply and infrastructure problems were a constant irritant. Because so many of the country's strongest men had been killed or maimed during the war,

much of the rebuilding of the country fell on the weary shoulders of the old or the ill-prepared shoulders of the young. Lorenz had easily found work in the ministry dedicated to rebuilding the country's roads and bridges. Beyond that, life had been very difficult, particularly for Agatha.

Agatha reported sadly that while she had expected widespread remorse from German society for what it had done to its Jews, she sensed little of any such sentiment. Even worse, she said, were the reports from the occupied countries. Everywhere, it seemed, Jewish war survivors were met with animosity, instead of compassion, as they tried to reclaim homes and property torn away from them by the bestiality of the Nazi war machine. Despite all, she said that Lorenz was intent on rebuilding his native country, warts and all, and that she intended to stand by him in the difficult days ahead.

After a while, Saundra shifted gears and refocused on the happy occasion that had brought the Kreislers to London. "There will be a time and place for dealing with such depressing circumstances, but it is not now. It's time for Shabbat dinner, which admittedly is not my strong suit. Rabbi Marcus has graciously agreed to lead us in a joyous Shabbat service."

The rest of the evening was filled with catching up and exchanging war stories. The storytelling might have extended into the wee hours of the evening, but for the fact that everyone had to get up early to go to synagogue the next morning. The occasion was Werner's *aufruf*, the ceremony in which a prospective groom is called up to the *bimah*, the dais in the front of the sanctuary, and honored with an *aliyah*, the opportunity to make a blessing over the *Torah*.

Tired from their travels and cognizant of the fact they would have to wake up early, Agatha and Lorenz asked to be excused so they might walk back to their hotel. Jonathan insisted on escorting them, since he knew the neighborhood and the lighting wasn't that good. The Kreislers were happy to have the escort, but then

asked somewhat offhandedly who would walk Jonathan home. Sarah, hearing the remark, blurted out, "I will, of course."

After taking their leave and repeating their earlier ritual of nonstop hugging and kissing, the Kreislers finally motioned to Jonathan and Sarah that it was time to leave. It was a lovely, moonlit evening and the 20-minute walk back to the hotel went quickly. Sarah kissed her parents and Jonathan gave Agatha a hug.

As Jonathan and Sarah turned around, Sarah took Jonathan's hand. Unlike Lara's hand that had seen years of hard work, Sarah's hand was soft and warm. The sensual feel of it made Jonathan tingle. There was no question that he liked being touched by this lovely young woman. He said nothing as the pleasant sensation swept over him.

Jonathan and Sarah had been walking hand in hand for a few minutes when they came to a bench. Sarah suggested they sit down. Jonathan agreed, hoping that Sarah would not release her hand from his once they sat. Jonathan was not disappointed. Sarah took Jonathan's hand with both of her hands and raised his hand to her lips, where she gently kissed his fingers. For a fleeting moment Jonathan thought about Lara, but the sensation of Sarah's sweet lips on his fingers allowed little room for such thoughts. He submitted and took both of her hands in his and, just as she had done, touched them to his lips.

Like Lara's eyes, Sarah's eyes were grey. But, they were darker in color and less intense in their gaze. At this moment, Sarah's eyes were exploring every feature of Jonathan's face. Then she leaned forward, her mouth slightly open, and kissed Jonathan.

Jonathan was now practically in a trance. He just sat where he was, tasting the sweetness of Sarah's lips and feeling himself totally under her control. Feeling Sarah's searching lips move from his mouth to his ears and then to his neck, he allowed his head to rest on the back of the bench and submitted to the feeling of delight that had overtaken him.

Sarah, sensing Jonathan's delight, began to kiss him more passionately. Soon, their mouths met again. This time, Sarah's mouth was fully open, as was Jonathan's. As Jonathan's tongue met hers, her body cried out for more. She wanted Jonathan to touch every part of her. He would have, had a passerby not brought them back to reality at that very moment.

"Wow," said Jonathan. "What brought that on?"

"Don't you know, silly?"

"Know what?" replied Jonathan, mystified by the question.

Biting her lip in a coquettish pose, Sarah's grey eyes focused on Jonathan and, as innocently as if she were answering a question about the weather, she replied, "Don't you know I have always loved you from the moment I met you?"

Jonathan started to reply, but before he could speak, Sarah put two fingers on his lips. She was holding back tears. "Please, don't say anything. I know from my aunt that you've been hurt and may still be feeling pain. Even so, I had to tell you how I felt. I don't expect anything of you. Indeed, after the past four or five years, living under and then hiding from the Nazis, I don't expect much out of life. I hope you won't hate me for this. In fact, I hope that one day you'll tell me you love me, too. But if you don't, I'll understand."

Jonathan was struck in ways he hadn't imagined. By all rights, he should have dismissed Sarah's entreaty as a girlish fantasy. But she was no longer a girl and he liked the idea of being loved, especially by one as tender as this young woman who was now looking at him tearfully. Gently, he took Sarah in his arms and helped her wipe away her tears. Then with a sly smile, he said suggestively, "I'll give the matter some thought, but I will need a little more to go on. We have to get back now, but I want to see you tomorrow and the next day and the next day."

Now smiling, Sarah replied, "Tomorrow it is."

They started walking back to the Brody's house hand in hand.

All of a sudden, Jonathan stopped and said concernedly, "How am I going to see you alone tomorrow? There's the *aufruf* at the synagogue in the morning, followed by lunch. I plan to visit my father's grave in the afternoon, even though Rabbi Marcus mentioned it was not customary on the Sabbath. Then, we'll be busy at the pre-wedding dinner in the evening!"

A pleasing thought wedged its way into Sarah's mind. "You know my father thought so much of your father. I liked him as well, the one time I met him. I'd like to go with you to the cemetery. I'll be respectful. It will give us time to be alone."

"Sarah, I can't ask you to do that."

"Yes, you can," said Sarah, looking at Jonathan determinedly. "I want to be part of your life. What could be a more important part of your life than your father?"

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That evening, Jonathan fell asleep effortlessly, his thoughts cradled dreamily by visions of Sarah. Soon his dreams took on a different direction. *He was in Bavaria, rowing a boat on a mountain lake. Sitting in the stern of the boat was Lara, her dark hair blowing in the breeze, her skin glistening under the sunlight and her eyes reflecting the blueness of the water. Arched back to take in the breeze, Lara's neck was exquisite in its gracefulness.*

From the shore, Jonathan could see the vague outline of a female figure. Her features were undetectable, but there was a radiant manner about her. Her long skirt and diaphanous veil wafted softly in the breeze. She was waving toward the boat and both Jonathan and Lara saw her waving. Jonathan was perplexed and didn't know what to do. Propelled by some unknown force, Jonathan started to row toward the shore, but Lara held up her hand. Jonathan hesitated, hoping for an explanation. But, there was none.

Jonathan's eyes were now imploringly fixed on Lara, hoping she would tell him what was happening. As Jonathan held his gaze, Lara's eyes suddenly became large portals. Through the portals emerged

Jonathan's mother, then his father and then Vanessa. Each clung to Jonathan for an instant and then moved back toward the portals. Jonathan pleaded with them to stay but soon they were gone. Only Lara remained and then she, too, folded herself into the portals of her own eyes. Jonathan was now alone in the boat. When he looked back to the shore, the figure in the long skirt and gossamer veil was gone. Then, everything was gone.

The next morning, Jonathan awoke early, his dream a vaguely distant memory. The rest of the household was also up early and ready to go to synagogue for Werner's *aufruf*. Jonathan and Sarah could not keep their eyes off one another, a circumstance that did not escape the happy notice of Sarah's parents. The entire assemblage filed through the front door and began the short walk to the synagogue. There was every reason for happiness, and the joyous sound of the family's banter bore this out as they proceeded to the house of worship. Walking at the end of the procession were Jonathan and Sarah. Had an observer been asked which of the marchers was to be married, he might well have chosen Jonathan and Sarah, who were walking practically sideways, lest they be denied a second or two of looking at one another.

Eventually, the family arrived at the synagogue, with the men taking their places on the main floor of the sanctuary and the women sitting in the galleries. Stanley Marcus had arrived earlier and was proudly sitting on stage, the *bima,* in the front of the synagogue. To their delight, Jonathan and Sarah had an easy view of one another and wasted no time in establishing eye contact.

Soon, the *Torah* Service began—the segment of the service in which a portion of the Five Books of Moses is chanted out loud. Wrapped in an ornate, royal blue silk cover, the four-handled *Torah* scroll was first paraded around the synagogue and then brought up to a reading table on the *bima*, where the scroll was unwound to the place where the appropriate reading appeared. The rabbi called up two congregants to perform *aliyahs*, the

blessings over the Torah. These *aliyahs* were reserved for descendants of the *Cohanim*, the Jewish priestly class, and the *Levis*, the descendants of the class of Jews who took care of the ancient temple of Jerusalem.

Then, it was time for the third *aliyah*, Werner's *aufruf*. Stanley Marcus had been given the honor of calling Werner's name. Werner climbed the four steps to the *bima* and positioned himself in front of the table on which the Torah scroll had been spread out. Reflecting the coaching he had received from Stanley, Werner confidently sang out the first part of the age-old blessing over the Torah: *Blessed Art Thou Oh Lord Our God, King of the Universe.*

When Werner was finished, a member of the congregation chanted the portion of the *Torah* reading linked to the third *aliyah*. Stanley then rose, looked at Werner affectionately, and announced how happy he was to be officiating the next day at Werner and Gwen's wedding. He observed that their union would bring together two families with strong attachments to the Jewish faith, despite their very different heritages.

During the *aufruf*, Jonathan forced himself to take his eyes off Sarah and was observing the scene on the *bima*. Jonathan was so happy for Werner. At the same time, though, Jonathan was feeling forlorn. He was already 27 and, after two more years of medical school and who knew how many years of residency, he would be well into his 30s. He wondered if he would he ever ascend the *bima* for an *aufruf*.

As he was thinking, Jonathan's gaze, as if guided by an external force, again turned upward toward the gallery. There, his eyes met those of a beaming Sarah. Jonathan felt a comforting sense of clarity.

After the service was over, everyone returned to Giles and Saundra's house for the traditional repast following synagogue services. There, the celebrants were treated to mounds of smoked fish, egg salad, fresh vegetables, rolls and pastries. Famished after

a long morning, everyone dug in. Before long, what had been a bountiful display of food was almost entirely gone. While the women cleaned up and talked excitedly about the forthcoming wedding, the men retired to the drawing room for talk or, for some, the *Shabbos* nap.

Jonathan took advantage of this respite in the day's events to excuse himself and inform everyone that he was heading to the cemetery to visit his father's grave. Sarah left at the same time, unnoticed.

The Golders Green Jewish Cemetery, or Hoop Lane Jewish Cemetery, as it was better known, was a two-kilometer walk from the Brody's house. The cemetery actually consisted of two cemeteries. The western half, where Jonathan and Sarah were heading, was a traditional northern European cemetery, with raised headstones. The eastern half followed the practice of southern European and North African Jews. There, the headstones were flat and flush with the ground.

In tribute to fallen Jews of the two world wars, a small portion of the cemetery was maintained by the Imperial War Graves Commission. It was here that Anton's remains were buried. Jonathan and Sarah had no difficulty in finding Anton's headstone.

Hand in hand, Jonathan and Sarah focused on the headstone and read the few words chiseled into the stone: "Major Anton Sternbloom, died 1943 in the North African campaign. Husband. Father. Scholar. Patriot."

For the second time in little over six months, Jonathan found himself crying in the presence of a woman. Gently, Sarah directed Jonathan to a nearby bench and sat beside him as he tried with difficulty to pull himself together. "Did you have a close relationship with your father?" she asked, soothingly.

Jonathan wiped away his tears and responded. "Once I grew up, our relationship became very close. But still, we were always separated by distance. When I was little, my father spent a lot of

time at his office in the university. That is, when he wasn't away in Africa on field trips or in some other place on sabbatical. He did his very best to spend time with me and I used to love it when he told me stories of the far-off places where he did his research. But, it was really my mother who raised me. She was the one who fed me, comforted me when I was sick, helped me with my homework and put me to sleep. I feel very guilty right now because I am standing in front of the grave of my father—a war hero—and yet, it's my mother I miss."

Jonathan once again began to cry. This time, Sarah took Jonathan into her arms. She did not attempt to hinder Jonathan's tears, but just held him and kissed him tenderly. "It sounds like your father was a hard-working man and a realist. Were he here, he would be proud you have such fond attachments to your mother."

For Jonathan, the feel of Sarah's embrace and her delicate kisses provided a level of serenity and consolation that mere words could not provide. Soon, the muffled sounds of Jonathan's crying stopped and he looked into the eyes of the comforting angel whom he had known for such a short time. Smiling warmly, he said, "The answer to your question is yes.

Confused, Sarah looked at Jonathan questioningly and asked, "What question?"

"Don't you remember? Early in our relationship, specifically yesterday, you asked me if I thought I could ever love you. Well, today, now that we are veterans of one another's company, I am saying yes."

Struck by Jonathan's announcement, Sarah sat silently, not wanting to move a muscle, not wanting to disturb any of the forces of the universe that had elicited such a dear declaration.

"I'm only here for another week, Sarah Kreisler. During that time, I would like the opportunity to fall in love with you. Are you up to the challenge?"

Happier than she had ever been in her life, the only thing Sarah could think of saying was, "Try me!"

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Werner and Gwen had chosen the nearby Golders Hill Park, with its beautiful fountain and formal gardens, as the site of the wedding. The weather forecast for the day of the wedding was, at best, indefinite. However, as morning turned to afternoon, the sun appeared from behind the London cloud cover. Everyone in the Brody household breathed a collective sigh of relief.

The house had been the scene of complete tumult since early in the day. There were last minute adjustments to Gwen's wedding dress as well as refinements required for Werner's rented morning suit. The kitchen issued forth a nonstop stream of irresistible smells as Saundra orchestrated the cooking of the delicacies and the baking of the desserts that would be served after the wedding. Giles had spent the preceding week scouring London for champagne, and he was busy icing the bottles and unpacking the glasses that would be used for the celebration.

Throughout this time, Jonathan and Sarah had done their best to find time for themselves, but the effort was proving fruitless amidst the day's commotion. Around two o'clock in the afternoon, the doorbell rang and Stanley Marcus presented himself along with four young men from one of his religious classes. One of the young men was carrying a large *talis*, a prayer shawl, and another was carrying four poles.

At the time of the ceremony, the four corners of the prayer shawl would be affixed to the four poles. Each of the four young men would then hold up a pole to form a *chupa*, the wedding canopy. Jonathan was delighted when Stanley advised that the *talis* had belonged to Jonathan's father, who had left it with Stanley when the elder Sternbloom had gone off to North Africa.

At three o'clock, the entire wedding party, with the exception of Gwen and her father, Alex, emerged from the Brody's house and

began the short walk to the park. A carriage had been reserved for Gwen and her father, who were planning on arriving at four o'-clock for the ceremony.

At the park, the wedding party arrayed themselves in a secluded part of the gardens bordered by high boxwoods and rose covered trellises. However, their effort at privacy was to no avail. As soon as they entered the park, with Werner decked out in his rented formal wear, they attracted a number of onlookers. A low buzz of anticipation could be heard as the crowd awaited the arrival of the bride.

Gwen and Werner had chosen a spot next to a fountain for the ceremony. The four students had positioned themselves in front of the fountain, each supporting one pole of the *chupa*. Stanley Marcus, wearing the vestments of an orthodox rabbi, stood patiently under the *chupa*. To his right, looking every bit the handsome groom in his stylish cutaway, stood Werner.

On one side of the *chupa*, Sarah, as maid of honor, excitedly awaited the arrival of the bride. Sarah was wearing a gaily-patterned floral dress and appeared to Jonathan to glisten in the afternoon sun. On the other side, Jonathan, as best man, stood next to Werner, joking and offering words of assurance, as he glanced as inconspicuously as possible at the radiant Sarah.

At four o'clock, the carriage arrived. Alex, who was wearing a boutonniere made up of his deceased wife's favorite flowers, got out of the coach first. Beaming, Alex then assisted his daughter down from the coach. According to custom, Werner had not seen Gwen the entire day. Werner now walked out from under the *chupa* to greet his bride, who was attired in a lovely white damask dress and whose face was partially obscured by a delicate bridal veil. Werner's face was alight with happiness as he walked to the carriage and took Gwen's hand in his. Together, they walked to the *chupa* where Stanley, Jonathan and Sarah awaited.

Jonathan's focus was almost entirely on Sarah, and Stanley's words were just background noise. However, as Gwen began to circle Werner to the strains of Stanley's *sheva bruchot,* the seven wedding blessings, Jonathan's gaze refocused on the bride. With each perambulation around her groom, Gwen curtsied coyly and then continued her circling. Werner was clearly delighted, and his appreciative smile was infectious.

Jonathan's thoughts were transported back to Palestine when he had first seen the ritual circling of the groom. How far he had come since those days and yet, it had not been far enough. The same sensation that had overtaken him at the *aufruf* again began to take hold. He wanted to be the beaming Werner. He wanted to be the celebrated groom around whom an adoring bride was circling as an expression of her devotion. Jonathan wanted happiness. He wanted Sarah.

The ceremony ended with the traditional breaking of the glass in memory of the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, 1,900 years in the past. Werner and Gwen kissed as the crowd applauded its approval, and the wedding party began its recessional to Saundra and Giles' home. As Sarah began to walk toward the rest of the wedding party, Jonathan casually found his way beside her and whispered that he would like to spend a few minutes walking with her in the gardens before they returned to the Brody's. Sarah, anticipating a sweet kiss, consented.

As the two lovers walked hand in hand over the park's grassy slopes bordered by magnolia and gingko trees, Sarah tried to make light conversation. Jonathan was uncharacteristically silent. Sarah became concerned and stopped to face Jonathan. The afternoon sun was beginning to descend and, in the dimming light, Sarah thought she observed Jonathan grimacing. Alarmed, she asked what was wrong.

Realizing he had been locked in thought and that Sarah might be misconstruing his serious manner, Jonathan took Sarah's hands

in his own and gently kissed them. "There is nothing wrong. It's just that I'm only here for another week and, shortly after that, I'll be leaving for America."

"I know," said Sarah, resignation written all over her face.

"It's not what you're thinking, my sweetheart."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I don't want to leave you behind. I know this is sudden and I would understand if you thought I was crazy."

"Crazy! I'm the one who said I loved you from the moment I saw you. Jonathan Sternbloom, are you proposing?"

"I guess I am."

"Then, do it properly. Down on your knee!"

Without a moment's thought, Jonathan bent down on one knee and said what he had wanted to say ever since the *aufruf*. "Sarah Kreisler, will you marry me and become my wife forever?"

Sarah looked into the eyes of her lover and beamed. "Jonathan Sternbloom, it would give me the greatest pleasure to become your wife. Now, please get up from that ridiculous pose so I can kiss you properly."

On the way back to the Brody's, Jonathan and Sarah decided they would not make any announcement until the next day, so as to not distract from Gwen and Werner's celebration. They also decided that their *aufruf* would be the coming Thursday morning, when the *Torah* would be out for the Thursday morning service, and that they would be married that afternoon. Thursday night would be their honeymoon before Jonathan took passage across the channel the following Friday, so that he would be back at the DP camp by the end of his leave. Back in the States, Jonathan would find an apartment for the two of them in Boston and Sarah would follow as soon as she could. As the wife of an American citizen, not to speak of a decorated war veteran, Jonathan was confident Sarah would have no difficulty obtaining a visa to sail to the United States.

Chapter 25
Werner and Gwen in Palestine
August 1946–January 1948

Werner and Gwen arrived in Palestine in August, soon after their wedding. Their voyage had been uneventful. As soon as their ship docked in Haifa, a representative of Alan Cunningham, the British High Commissioner in Palestine, greeted them. The young man, whose name was Vincent Stanhope, extended the warm regards of the High Commissioner who had known and admired Gwen's father. Stanhope advised that he had been instructed to make the offices of the High Commissioner fully available to the young couple.

With assurance, he noted that the Crown had 100,000 men under arms in Palestine and that, despite a growing flurry of outbursts, His Majesty's government had matters well in hand. Lowering his voice in a sobering manner, he did caution that rumors about a possible partition plan had heightened the tension. To his surprise, Stanhope's words had not evoked the level of concern that he had expected. Nevertheless, he tried to bring home the alarm he was trying to convey by suggesting that Werner and Gwen might wish a military escort during their entire stay in the country.

Werner answered that Gwen and he were most grateful for the kind offer, but that they had already arranged for an escort who would be meeting them at their hotel. Not wanting to meddle, Stanhope did not inquire about the escort or the couple's destination. He wished them a safe holiday and arranged for a driver to take them to their hotel.

At the hotel, three representatives from *Kibbutz Ramah Gan* greeted Werner and Gwen. The older man was none other than

Rabbi Chaim Goldston, who did not wait for a minute before peppering Werner and Gwen with questions about Jonathan and Rabbi Goldston's old friend, Stanley Marcus. The two other members of the welcoming committee introduced themselves as Joan and Sidney Arenstein, Americans who had made *aliyah* as soon as the war had ended and who were now living on the *kibbutz*. Immediately, the two couples hit it off and the ride to the *kibbutz* was filled with stories of *kibbutz* life and how well Joan and Sidney were fitting in.

Werner and Gwen also fit in quite well. At the end of three weeks, they had become fully immersed in *kibbutz* life and had no hesitation about deciding to stay. Had the British authorities known about their whereabouts, they might not have had an easy time in carrying out their wishes. Since 1939, the British mandatory government in Palestine had resolutely resisted Jewish immigration in the hope of maintaining calm with the Arab population. Luckily, however, Werner and Gwen hadn't advised Stanhope of where they were heading. With little fanfare other than a few letters sent home under newly adopted names, Werner and Gwen began their new lives as *kibbutzniks*.

Life on the *kibbutz* was a revelation for both of them. In Europe, each had searched for identification and meaning amidst the chaos of war. Now, Jews like themselves surrounded them and they felt at home. In addition to their routine *kibbutz* chores, Gwen became a master vintner and Werner became the editorial writer for the *kibbutz* newspaper.

At first, Werner's writings were about life on an agricultural compound. As 1946 melted into 1947, Werner's writings became more political and more aggressively nationalistic. Political discourse had become the *lingua franca* of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine. All over the country, there was talk about a possible partition of the country into two lands: one for the country's 1,200,000 Arabs and one for the country's 600,000 Jews.

There was also talk and worry about whether the Arab population would settle for a divided Palestine.

It was true that the British, through the 1917 Balfour Declaration, had designated Palestine, the ancient land of the Jews since biblical times, as the modern homeland of the Jewish world. However, earlier, the British had laid the foundation for confusion. In an exchange of letters, Sir Henry McMahon, England's ranking official in Egypt, promised Hussein ibn Ali al-Hashimi, the Sharif of Mecca and the titular leader of the *Hejaz*, the Arabian lands bordering on the Red Sea, that England would support an Arab state in the middle east if the Arabs would fight against the Ottomans. Under the leadership of the legendary T. E. Lawrence, they had.

McMahon's letters never specifically identified Palestine as falling within the parameters of the would-be Arab state and McMahon later asserted that there had been no intention to do so. Nevertheless, the Arab world construed the promised area to include Palestine. So, it was no surprise when, after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks in the Great War, an Arab world, heady with nationalistic dreams, refused to accept the terms of the Balfour Declaration.

That resistance was no different in 1947 than it had been during McMahon's time. With partition looming on the horizon, Arab rejection of a Jewish state remained a foregone conclusion. Throughout the land, under the auspices of the Jewish Agency, the Jews of the *Yishuv* began to plan for this eventuality. The *Haganah* had installed armed units wherever Jewish settlements might be found. Of necessity, the *Haganah* was so secret that recruiting was done clandestinely and with utmost care. Once chosen, a *Haganah* recruit would be expected to continue his or her normal life while training to become a member of a Jewish fighting force when the need inevitably arose.

Werner's editorial writings had come to the attention of the *Haganah* district in the area south of Tel Aviv. One day in early

1947, when Werner and Gwen were in Tel Aviv shopping for clothing for Chaim, their newborn son, a *Haganah* operative approached Werner. Werner was quickly won over as a recruit. Gwen expressed concern, but she understood the peril facing the country's Jews and she was supportive of her husband.

All during the year, Werner met with his fellow *Haganah* operatives two days a week to train in physical combat, simulate rescue missions and discuss strategy. At these meetings, only first names were used and only the local chain of command was revealed.

Then, the moment everyone in the *Yishuv* had hoped for finally arrived. Five thousand miles away, in Flushing Meadow, New York, the United Nations was preparing to vote on a plan to partition Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs. The date was November 19, 1947, and the outcome was uncertain. The Arab world had mounted a furious campaign in opposition to the initiative. Indeed, only a few days earlier, supporters of partition had postponed a similar vote out of fear that the necessary votes would not be forthcoming. However, spearheaded by the diplomatic arm-twisting of the United States, enough nations slowly fell into line to assure a favorable outcome. Still, the Jewish world held its collective breath as the votes of each of the 56 member states were counted. One by one, the names of the nations of the world were called and their delegates stood up to be heard. When it was over, the vote for partition had succeeded. Thirty-three states had voted yes, 13 states had voted no, and 10 had abstained. For 1,900 years, Jews had longed to return to their ancestral homeland. Now, it was happening.

In Jerusalem, David Ben-Gurion walked out onto his balcony and proclaimed that the great day had arrived and that Israel had been redeemed for its people. In Jewish communities throughout Palestine, there was rejoicing.

In *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*, everyone had been listening to the United Nations vote on the radio. When the final tally in favor of

partition was announced, a great cry of joy rose from the people. Neighbors hugged, and sweets were handed out to the children. All that night, Werner and Gwen danced and sang, as did their fellow *kibbutzniks*. The next day was *Shabbat*, when the men and women of the *kibbutz* normally refrained from work, even cooking. This *Shabbat*, however, would be one to remember. Together, the men gathered the best meat and produce the *kibbutz* had to offer and the women went to work. When the food preparation was completed, the merriment began anew and continued well into the night.

In the morning, however, the *kibbutz* awakened to news that there had been widespread Arab rioting in Jerusalem. Werner and the other *Haganah* members went about their routine assignments, but they were all on high alert. Anxiously, they waited for events to unfold. With each day, there were new reports of bombings and other acts of violence committed by both the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine. By the end of the year, 150 Jews and 175 Arabs had been victims of the deadly antagonism that was infecting all corners of the country.

In early January 1948, the Semiramis Hotel in the south central Katamon sector of Jerusalem was bombed and 24 Christian Arabs were killed. The attack led to widespread panic and further reprisals. In early February, after a string of devastating attacks by both Arabs and Jews, Arabs bombed the Jerusalem office of the Palestine Post. The blast destroyed the building and killed three workers. As these events transpired, Werner and Sidney Arenstein, who was also *Haganah*, wondered how long it would be before they would be called up. The call came little more than a week later.

Chapter 26
Zef, a Man of the Haganah
Early 1942–January 1948

In a large room in a nondescript warehouse in the gritty Levinsky Market section of Tel Aviv, two men stood in front of Werner, Sidney and the 200 other Haganah fighters who had received orders to report. One of the men identified himself only by the name Yisrael. He was of average height and weight, but his determined manner commanded the attention of everyone in the room. He had immigrated to Palestine in 1923, lived in Jerusalem, and knew the country as well as any of the Jewish settlors. Yisrael was the Haganah commander in Jerusalem, a job that would prove trying beyond expectation in the months to come.

The other man who stood in front of the young *Haganah* fighters was tall. He also identified himself by his first name, Zef. In his early 40s, Zef was from the *Haganah* general staff of Yigal Yadin, the *Haganah* Chief of Operations. Zef had arrived in Palestine less than two years previously. However, his background had made him an instant choice for a leadership role in training and motivating *Haganah* fighters.

In the Bohemian province of Czechoslovakia where he had lived most of his life, his name had not been Zef, but Tomás. As with many new immigrants to Palestine, Tomás had taken on a new identity upon his arrival.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Tomás had been well known in Czechoslovakia for his exploits. Born to a Jewish mother, Johana, and Czech father, Ladizlav, Tomás had been indoctrinated into the manly art of boxing at an early age. By the time he was 19, he had become the ranking contender for the Czech light

heavyweight boxing crown. In the 1930s, he had coached the Czech army boxing team and had taught self-defense to officers at the Czech war college. His life had been one of contentment and potential, owing to his accomplishments and stature. He had a loving wife, Anita, and a bubbly young daughter, Michaela.

In October 1938, when Hitler muscled his way into the Czech Sudetenland, the country's large German-speaking border area, Tomás and his family took notice but felt secure. Tomás' father was a well-established Bohemian official and Tomás, of course, was also well known. The family went about its business, but became concerned when Hitler imposed a forced union between Germany and the Sudetenland. Five months later, when Hitler occupied all of Czechoslovakia and then severed the province of Slovakia, the family's concern turned into outright fear.

As the family sat around the dinner table night after night discussing the German invasion, the graveness of their situation became apparent. Ladizlav was gentile, but Johana and Tomás were Jews. Neither Johana nor Tomás knew much about Judaism but, as the two of them were soon to find out, the demonic Nazi quest for ethnic cleansing made no distinction between practicing and non-practicing Jews. Race was all that mattered and, soon enough, Johana and Tomás race would prove deadly.

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In the northwest corner of Bohemia, Emperor Joseph II had built a fortress in the late 18th century. Named Terezín after the Emperor's mother, Maria Theresa, the fortress and its connected military town had undergone many changes since its inception, but none as terrifying as the use to which the Nazis had put it after occupying Czechoslovakia. By the end of 1940, the fortress, ironically known to history as the *Little Fortress*, had become a giant prison complex for dissidents, Jews, and agitators. Its conditions were deplorable and the behavior of its Nazi guards, sadistic. Those prisoners who counted themselves among the lucky

slept restlessly on makeshift bunks. Those less lucky or identified as trouble makers were squeezed into airless cells lacking both sanitary facilities and beds. There, they were left to rot; that is, when they were not being tortured.

As the Little Fortress was coming into its own as a place of horror, the adjacent military village of Terezín was emerging as a large-scale prison ghetto for the Jews of Czechoslovakia. At first it seemed tolerable, as it served only as a destination for the Jewish elderly and the well connected. One might even have called it attractive with its quaint town green and functioning municipal buildings. However, by 1942, it was well established as a place of overcrowded internment. Here, most of the Czech Jews of Bohemia and Moravia were now being sent.

Once they arrived, the newcomers were placed in the same residential quarters as their predecessors. However, flats designed to hold one family were now teeming with four or more families. Food and medicine were scarce, and disease was hard to control. But at least the Jewish occupants of Terezín were alive—alive, that is, until they were designated for transport to the deadly Nazi extermination camps in Poland.

Into this scene, Tomás and his family arrived. At first, their existence at Terezín was manageable. Johana and Anita helped with the communal kitchen, Ladizlav injected himself into the organizational life of the community, Tomás formed boxing classes and Michaela joined a children's group of three year olds. However, the family could not ignore the fact that more and more of Terezín's inmates were being designated for transport to the pitiless camps in the East. Still, many months went by and Tomás began to think his celebrity status might have insulated his family from the dreaded boxcars into which so many of the camp's occupants had been unmercifully crammed. However, in early February 1944, Tomás was quickly disabused of any sense of security or entitlement.

At three in the afternoon, Tomás and his family, along with 60 other frightened camp inmates, were pushed into a freight car heading East. The weather was frigid and the car was a rolling hell. When the train arrived at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, Tomás' mother was dead and Michaela had developed a terrible hacking cough. But the worst had not yet occurred. After standing for hours in the frigid cold, Tomás and his family were marched toward the camp and, in a terrifying moment that Tomás would relive over and over again for the rest of his life, his father, dear wife and daughter were torn away from him and marched off to an uncertain fate.

Tomás was assigned to one of several Auschwitz work camps where day after day he labored, cutting wood or mining stone for the Nazi war effort. He had lost a lot of weight, but the grit and determination that had propelled him to the top of the Czech boxing world had also enabled him to hold on while many of his fellow prisoners succumbed to the hard work and harsh living conditions. When he found out that his father, wife and darling daughter had been gassed and that their remains had been exterminated in Auschwitz's gas chambers, Tomás was too numb to cry. With a sense of overpowering emptiness, he moved from day to day, not thinking about anything except how weary he was.

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When the Soviet army liberated Auschwitz in January 1945, Tomás was one of only 7,000 surviving prisoners out of more than a million unfortunates—most of them Jews—who had spent their last dying moments in the camp. Tomás had wasted away to a mere 105 pounds. He could hardly move. The authorities gave him food and placed him on a train bound for Austria. There he was again interned, this time in a displaced persons camp.

It was in the DP camp that Tomás met the woman who would become his second wife. She was significantly younger than he. Like Tomás, she had endured hardship and was without friends.

She appealed to Tomás. Even more significantly, she was pregnant, and her pregnancy touched a responsive chord in Tomás. As Tomás got to know the woman, the thought of becoming a father to her unborn baby became more and more attractive. He could never replace his beloved Michaela, but he could console himself with another child. The biological father of the child was of no consequence to Thomas, and he never asked. One fine fall day, Thomas proposed and the forlorn woman accepted.

Not long after, Tomás' new wife gave birth to a healthy baby girl. Soon, a *Haganah* representative came to the camp and told Tomás that a ship was waiting to transport his new family and him to Palestine. By then, the British were rigorously interdicting all refugees heading for Palestine, a cruel practice that would eventually result in more than 65,000 heartbroken refugees being interned in Cyprus. But Tomás and his new wife and child were lucky. Their ship was able to run the blockade and dock in the waters off Haifa. When the family disembarked, Tomás took the name Zef as a symbol of his new life. Eventually, Zef's new wife became pregnant again.

Zef's background as a fighter and coach quickly came to the attention of the *Haganah* and he was immediately recruited. As he regained his strength, he rose rapidly through the *Haganah* ranks and served as a trainer and a motivator. Now, as he stood studying the 200 *kibbutzniks* who were assembled before him, he thought about the importance of what he was about to say. With conviction, he began to speak.

"I needn't tell you what is happening in the country. Palestine is smoldering. When the British pick up stakes in less than three months, there will be a major conflagration. Only one thing stands in the way of Arab annihilation of the Jews of Palestine. That one thing is you, the fighters of the *Haganah*. In the days and months ahead, you and your fellow fighters from all over Israel will be called upon to do the impossible. We estimate there may be

60,000 *Haganah* fighters throughout the land, but there is enough weaponry on hand to outfit maybe 20,000 of us. We are scouring the world for weapons, but we are not there yet.

Zef looked around to see if he had made his point. From the looks of the young faces in front of him, he had. So, he continued. "The Arabs cannot be expected to remain idle. We must be ready for a combined assault from five Arab armies. The Egyptians will come up the Sinai and strike from the south. King Abdullah's Arab Legion will be poised to cross the Moab Hills and strike us in the middle of the country. The armies of Iraq and Syria will sweep down from the northeast into the Jezreel Valley, while Lebanon will threaten us from the north and the sea. For the invading Arab armies, the conquest of the land is a religious imperative. For us, fending off the invaders is a moral imperative. It is not only a matter of fighting for our wives and children. It will be our way of sanctifying the memories of the nearly six million of us who were slaughtered by the Germans and their helpers."

Again, Zef looked at his audience. Some of the young men were nodding in agreement. Some were holding back tears. But to a man, Zef saw one thing: grim determination. Zef observed this display of grit with grateful satisfaction. Whatever he said to these young men, he would not be able to get around the fact that the odds were heavily stacked against both them and the Jews of the *Yishuv*. Everyone in the Jewish Agency and the *Haganah* establishment knew it.

Zef continued. "In the months to come, each of you will be called upon to display uncommon courage. Because of where we are located, the job of this unit will be to keep open the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. There are 100,000 Jews in Jerusalem. The road to Jerusalem ascends 2,500 feet. As the road winds its way upward, it passes through a number of high gorges topped off by hostile, cliff-top Arab villages. Keeping the road open through these ravines will require every ounce of energy and courage we

possess, but we must preserve a lifeline to Jerusalem at all costs. Without it, we will be lost. So, each of you, go back to your *kibbutzim*. Give your loved ones a kiss and prepare to win a country for them." The room broke out into wild applause. Zef shook a few hands and then left.

Chapter 27
Janós Herskovitz's Journey to Palestine
April 1946–April 1948

A number of violent incidents presaged the announcement by the British Government in February 1947 that it had had enough and would withdraw from Palestine by June 1948. The most notorious of these episodes involved a retaliatory action by the Irgun—a radical version of the Haganah. It began on June 26, 1946, when British soldiers, in search of records pertaining to Jewish resistance efforts in Palestine, broke into the headquarters of the Jewish Agency in Palestine. In the wake of the break-in, British soldiers and police arrested 2,500 members of the resistance during the following month. Many of those arrested were members of the Irgun. The Irgun resolved to hit back. Their target was Jerusalem's venerable King David Hotel, headquarters to both the Secretariat of the British Government in Palestine and the British Military Forces in Palestine.

The *Irgun*'s primary objective was to deal a blow to the Criminal Investigation Unit of the British Army, the unit that had been pursuing resistors since the break-in. With the unit headquartered in the King David, the hotel itself had become a target. But not even the *Irgun* could have anticipated the catastrophic consequences of the planned attack.

On July 22, 1946, representatives of the *Irgun* made three calls warning that the King David would soon be bombed and stressing the importance of the premises being evacuated. The calls—made by a 16-year-old *Irgun* recruit—were directed to the Palestine Post, the French Consulate next door and the hotel. However, no

evacuation occurred, perhaps because the caller's youthfulness had failed to impress his listeners. As a result, when the explosives were detonated in the basement of the south wing of the hotel, 91 people were killed. Many of the dead were civil servants whom the *Irgun* had hoped to warn off the premises. Fifteen of the casualties were Jews.

The Jewish Agency in Palestine condemned the bombing, as did the victimized British Military Forces. Two members of the *Irgun* bombing team were killed. The remaining members closeted themselves in a secret *Irgun* hideaway where they listened to news of the bombing with mixed emotions. For some, the mission was a success and called for celebration. For others, the death toll was sickening. Among those celebrating was the team's detonation expert, Janós Herskovitz.

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As he sat in silent satisfaction, Janós reflected on his family members who had died in the Warsaw Ghetto, his escape from the Treblinka death camp and the fates that had brought him to where he was. The days following his escape were a time of unremitting hardship. Finding food was the biggest challenge. He went almost three days without eating. The forest was cold in the evening and every sound added to Janós' torment. Finally, Janós stumbled onto a band of Poles from the Resistance. It was not necessary to tell the Poles that he was Jewish; his emaciated and ragged appearance told the whole story. Mercifully, the Poles outfitted Janós and allowed him to remain with them.

In the months that followed, Janós excelled in the group's main activity—hunting and killing Nazis. For all intents and purposes, Janós might easily have been hunting rabbits. He felt no more reluctance in killing a Nazi then he would have in killing a hapless hare. Quickly, he became the mop-up member of the group, making sure each German soldier who fell into the group's clutches was properly dispatched with a bullet to the head. When not busy

in this manner, Janós occupied his time learning as much as he could about explosives and laying mines. In no time, he became a first-class demolitions expert, a sapper.

When the war ended, Janós made his way west, winding up in Amsterdam. His goal was Palestine. Janós had grown and was well over six feet tall. His size had attracted a barge captain in Amsterdam, and Janós became a crewmember on the Budapest-bound barge. In the middle of August 1945, the barge set sail up the Rhine. At each interim port, Janós would offload cargo and then bring new cargo on board. The work was backbreaking, but the food was good. Before long, Janós gained weight and muscle, but emotionally, he was frail and as tightly wound as a cobra waiting for its prey.

As the barge passed each pastoral scene along the river, Janós became more agitated. When he looked at the commanding castles along the shore, Janós thought only of the Jewish victims of the walled Nazi concentration camps. When he saw the charming red-tiled roofs of Bamberg and the old town of Nuremberg, he thought only of Hitler mapping out the *Final Solution* from his charming Bavarian redoubt in Berchtesgaden. He held back his fury, knowing that he would have an opportunity to unleash it once he arrived in Palestine.

After about three weeks, the barge finally dropped anchor at Budapest. Janós collected his pay and, after making a few discreet inquiries about which route to follow, headed south toward Serbia. Most of the time he walked, carefully avoiding Soviet officials. Occasionally, he hitched a ride on a farm vehicle or truck. He stayed in Serbia for a few weeks, doing odd jobs to earn money with which to buy clothes. Most often, his bed was the floor of a barn.

From Serbia, Janós headed south toward the mountainous region of Macedonia and then down through Greece to Athens. In Athens, Janós touted his skill as a deckhand and landed a job on a Mediterranean cargo ship bound for Lebanon. In Lebanon, Janós

collected his pay and met up with some members of the Jewish community who escorted him to a ship bound for Haifa in Palestine. Once he arrived in Palestine in April 1946, some ninth months after leaving Amsterdam, he made it known that his mission in life was that of killing any and all antagonists of the Jewish people. Janós' pronouncements soon came to the attention of the local *Irgun* recruiter. After intense interrogation that revealed Janós' familiarity with explosives, followed by two months of training, Janós was assigned to the team bound for the King David Hotel.

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Janós and his confederates waited impatiently as the world voiced its outrage over the King David bombing. In due course, a car appeared and a large man emerged from the driver's side. Several of the huddled men recognized him as a lieutenant of the Irgun chief, Menachem Begin. The man assessed the team and noticed immediately the contrition on some of their faces. Remorse was not in the Irgun vocabulary. Those who were suffering from remorse would henceforth have to suffer outside the confines of the Irgun. Before congratulating the team members on their great success, the man made a mental note identifying those who were obviously shaken by their experience. It was then that the man observed the elation in the eyes of Janós Herskovitz. *Now there's a recruit*, thought the man. *Tough, skilled in destroying the enemy and bereft of any visible signs of guilt. Yes, Herskovitz would be just right for the tasks that lay ahead.*

For the next year and a half, Janós worked his way up the *Irgun* ladder, performing whatever was asked of him. But nothing compared to the enormity of the King David attack. Then, in April 1948, he received an assignment that would end his tenure with the *Irgun*.

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Five months after the UN partition vote, the *Haganah* waged a life and death battle to secure the road to Jerusalem. *Haganah*

forces captured the strategic, hilltop village of Kastel, located eight kilometers west of Jerusalem. But, their forces were stretched thin and their hold on the village was tenuous. Hoping that the *Irgun* would divert Arab attention from Kastel by attacking the nearby rock quarries at Tzuba, the *Haganah* provided the *Irgun* with rifles and other assault weapons. However, the *Irgun* defied its benefactors, using the weapons to further its own agenda at a different location—Deir Yassin, a quiet community of about 600 Arab villagers, located just west of Jerusalem on a rocky hilltop.

The Deir Yassin villagers made their living by working at a nearby rock quarry. Despite the escalating violence that took over much of Palestine, Deir Yassin remained quiet, posed no threat to the Jews of Jerusalem and offered little strategic value to any of the vying forces. For the *Irgun*, however, Deir Yassin was an attractive target for the simple reason that a successful assault on the village would resonate throughout Jerusalem.

On April 9, one hundred *Irgun* fighters, carrying the rifles that their leaders had duplicitously obtained from the *Haganah*, gathered south of Deir Yassin in the Jewish community of Beit Hakerem. Led by their commander, Ben-Zion Cohen, the men and women of the *Irgun* assembled that night for the start of their stealthy march toward the sleeping village to their north. Among them, a *Haganah* rifle slung over his shoulder, was Janós Herskovitz.

On Cohen's signal, the *Irgun* fighters opened fire on the village. Hysteria broke out and sleepy villagers in their bedclothes ran from their small houses in search of protection. Wherever they ran, they encountered *Irgun* gunfire. As the villagers fled the deadly stream of bullets, the *Irgun* fighters moved deeper into the village.

Where the *Irgun* encountered resistance, its fighters overwhelmed the defending villagers with superior firepower. Even more devastating, when needed, the invaders blew up any

building sheltering the defenders. In these circumstances, the *Irgun* looked to Janós for setting the charges.

Janós was so busy setting charges that he did not have an opportunity to unshoulder his rifle. The opportunity finally arose. As the *Irgun* approached one cluster of buildings, it encountered unexpectedly stiff resistance. Four *Irgun* fighters near Janós fell to the ground dead and Cohen, the leader of the assault, took a bullet that seriously wounded him. A deadly mix of hatred and retribution suddenly overtook the remaining *Irgun* fighters and they began to kill everyone in sight, whether armed defenders, women or children. When bullets ran out, the fighters hacked their defenseless victims with knives. The screaming was pitiful, yet the *Irgun* continued its grisly work.

When a small group of defenders surrendered, Janós and two others were directed to march them to the village center for execution. Janós complied. But as he prodded the hapless villagers, he was suddenly overcome with remembrances of Treblinka. *How many times had he witnessed similarly defenseless men being marched to their deaths for no reason? How many times had he seen the look of resignation on the faces of the condemned? How many times had he and others been required to gather up the corpses of the condemned?* All of sudden, Janós knew he could no longer kill.

The condemned villagers were marched in front of the wall where they were to be executed. Before the *Irgun* fighters, the condemned men hung their heads and waited for the inevitable. Janós and the other fighters were given the order to shoot. Janós yelled out, "Wait!" as he tried to position himself in front of the condemned men. But his efforts were to no avail. As two other *Irgun* fighters held him to the ground, Janós heard a volley of shots and knew that the villagers were no more. Janós remained on the ground, his body crouched in a fetal position, as tears streamed down his face.

When the killing was over and the *Irgun* fighters withdrew, Janós was taken back to *Irgun* headquarters. He expected to be punished, maybe even killed. He was told to take some time off and report back when he was ready. But Janós knew he would not again be ready. He left the headquarters building, never to return.

Chapter 28
As a New State Arises, the Battle for Survival Begins
April–October 1948

The attack on Deir Yassin had whipped up an even greater fear than its perpetrators had imagined. Palestinians began to flee the country in unprecedented numbers. For those who remained, the mere mention of Deir Yassin fanned the flames of Arab revulsion toward Palestine's Jewish population.

Then, the retaliation began. Just four days after the Deir Yassin massacre, Arab assailants ambushed a medical convoy headed for Mount Scopus, site of Jerusalem's acclaimed Hadassah Hospital. With unmoved detachment, the British failed to respond as the men and women of the convoy were systematically slaughtered. Few survived. Among the dead was Chaim Lasky, the revered director of the hospital.

Barely did the Jews of Jerusalem have time to mourn and bury the dead from the Mount Scopus massacre when another staggering blow was delivered a few kilometers south. Located between Hebron and Jerusalem, *Kfar Etzion* was one of the oldest *kibbutzim* in Palestine. Due to its strategic location south of Jerusalem, it stood as the southernmost line of defense against an Arab attack on Jerusalem. But the *kibbutz*'s supply lines to Jerusalem had been severed after an earlier convoy attack, and the *kibbutz* was a vulnerable and essential target.

On May 13, Arab Legionnaires and irregulars swept down on the *kibbutz* and its three satellite blocs. When the fighting was over, most of the *kibbutz*'s *Haganah* fighters had been killed in a

desperate attempt to defend it. The fate of the survivors who surrendered was not much better. To the retributive refrain of Deir Yassin, many of the unarmed survivors were led to the central square of the *kibbutz*. There, their Arab captors rained fire on them at point-blank range.

The next day, General Sir Alan Cunningham, the last High Commissioner in Palestine, boarded the HMS Euryalus and sailed from Haifa to England, thus ending the British Mandate after more than 25 thankless years. Later that day, David Ben-Gurion, the diminutive leader of the *Yishuv*, stood on a small stage in the former house of Mayer Dizengoff, the first mayor of Tel Aviv. Under a portrait of Chaim Weizmann, Ben-Gurion looked down on the 200 hushed guests. Calmly, he noted the United Nations vote on partition and then, referencing the Jews' ancient connection to the land on which he now stood, laid out the moral and historic case for the creation of a new state for the Jewish people, the State of Israel.

Many *Haganah* officials, among them Zef, were in the audience. To a man, they fixated on the white-haired Ben-Gurion as he described the egalitarian ethos that would characterize the first Jewish state in nearly 2,000 years. When it was over 30 minutes later, Zef and his fellow *Haganah* fighters embraced one another as a cheer rose from the audience. A state had been created. Just nine hours later, the United States, reflecting the wishes of President Harry S. Truman, if not those of his largely pro-Arab State Department, recognized the new State of Israel. Now it would fall on the shoulders of Zef and his comrades to defend this new state against overwhelming odds. There was no time to lose.

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Immediately after declaring the existence of the new Jewish state, Ben-Gurion summoned his top *Haganah* lieutenants, among them, Zef. What Ben-Gurion told the *Haganah* leaders was daunting. First, there was good reason to expect substantial new

shipments of weapons from Europe, but for the time being, the *Yishuv* was woefully short on weaponry. Second, the five armies of the Arab combatants were moving determinedly and making headway in almost all sectors of the new state. Third, 25,000 reinforcements from the internment camps in Cyprus could be expected. However, almost all would be green and none would have had time to train properly once they arrived in Israel.

Most importantly, said Ben-Gurion, Jewish resolve in both the old and new sectors of Jerusalem was waning under the strain of a prolonged Arab siege. The daily caloric intake of the city's besieged residents was gravely inadequate, and starvation would likely set in unless something was done to replenish the city's pantries. Ben-Gurion knew that the task would be Herculean. Summoning all of his persuasive talents, he beseeched his fighters to free Jerusalem. The operation to liberate the city had begun.

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Dominating a key three-mile stretch of the road to Jerusalem, between Latrun and Bab el Wad, stood a fortress-like structure that had previously served as a British police station. The fortress at Latrun, now occupied by the Arab Legion, afforded the Legion's field guns and mortars a commanding vantage point over the exposed road below.

Haganah forces had earlier taken Latrun with little resistance. Then, in a fateful decision that would haunt the *Haganah* for months, its commanders chose to abandon the fortress so that their men and women could be redeployed to the south where 10,000 Egyptian Expeditionary Force fighters, supported by 15 aircraft and a full tank force, were marching north toward Tel Aviv.

When the *Haganah* commanders realized their mistake, the fortress at Latrun returned to Arab control and the road to Jerusalem was blocked. The *Haganah* tried again to run the Arab blockade at Latrun, but to no avail. In the wake of this defeat, a

300-truck convoy under *Haganah* escort had been all but destroyed. Now, Zef and the other *Haganah* leaders would have to retake Latrun at all costs, lest the heart of the new nation—Jerusalem—be starved into submission.

In the days that followed, the *Haganah* again readied itself for the attack on Latrun that Ben-Gurion had demanded. When it came, the attack was launched with inadequate intelligence. The *Haganah's* inexperienced fighters—among them the refugees from Cyprus who had disembarked at Haifa just days earlier—were exposed as they moved through the wheat fields near the fortress in full daylight. Two thousand Arab Legionnaire and irregular fighters, equipped with anti-tank weapons, Howitzers and entrenched machine gun emplacements, showered deadly fire on the inexperienced invaders. Two hundred and twenty *Haganah* men and women fell to the ground.

Finally, the order to fall back was given. Among the retreating fighters were Zef, Werner and Sidney. As the order to fall back was sounded, Sidney was catapulted into the air by a bullet that struck him in the buttock. Zef insisted that Werner continue his retreat as Zef single-handedly dragged Sidney to safety. After, the three reconnoitered in the Jewish village of Hula. Sidney received sedation to relieve the pain, but it would take time for a doctor to see him. As Werner and Zef waited for medical assistance, they exchanged stories about their experiences in Europe during the war. By the time help arrived for Sidney, Zef and the much younger Werner had become fast friends.

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Each of the new friends returned to his respective family, but each slept restlessly. They knew that Mickey Marcus, the West Point graduate and American Army colonel, had been given orders to try one more assault on Latrun. Zef would be commanding one of the four battalions assigned to the task and Werner would be by his side.

On the morning of May 29, Zef turned over in bed one last time and patted his sleeping wife's swollen belly. Zef loved his wife dearly. However, except for rare instances such as the one that had given rise to his wife's pregnancy, passion had never been a part of their marriage. Zef suspected something having to do with his wife's past was the reason for her disinterest, but she was unhesitatingly devoted to him and he respected her privacy. He comforted himself by attributing the lack of passion in their marriage to the age difference that separated them.

Drowsily, Zef's wife responded to the feel of her husband's tender movements as he traced circles around her abdomen. She placed her hands on his for a long moment and then kissed him goodbye as he raised himself from the bed. Silently saying a prayer for his safe return, she fell back asleep. Zef boiled a pot of coffee, donned his military fatigues, and lovingly looked in on his sleeping daughter before quietly closing the door to their small apartment.

Outside Zef's building, a jeep waited to take him to the staging area from where the renewed assault on Latrun would be launched. All over Tel Aviv and the nearby *kibbutzim* the same ritual was taking place, with *Haganah* fighters kissing their loved ones goodbye as they headed for the Latrun staging area. Among the couples saying goodbye to one another were Gwen and Werner.

At *Haganah* headquarters, Colonel Mickey Marcus was going over last-minute plans with the heads of the armored and infantry brigades that would be launching the attack. This time, announced Marcus, they would not make the same mistakes that the attackers had made during the previous assault on Latrun four days earlier.

In particular, emphasized Marcus, the reconnaissance would be better. Further, the *Haganah's* first mechanized battalion, consisting of 13 half-tracks just received from Europe and 22 heavily-plated vehicles, would be supporting the three infantry

battalions assigned to the attack. Beit Jiz and Beit Susin—the two Arab villages that had proved so nettlesome in the previous attack on Latrun—would be neutralized first so that they could not be used for counter attacks. Finally, the battalion fighters assigned to the assault on the Latrun police station would be equipped with fearsome flamethrowers that could reach the defenders positioned on the roof of the fortress.

May 30, the night of the assault, was warm. But Werner experienced a chill as he leaned against the half-track that would take him and the others from Hulda—the closest Jewish village to Latrun for the attack that night. Zef came by, smiled reassuringly at Werner, and directed Werner and the remaining members of their infantry battalion—the 71st—to check their weapons and mount their assigned half-tracks. At Zef's direction, the half-tracks lurched forward and the attack on Latrun was underway.

Under cover of dark, the *Haganah* forces quietly worked their way toward Latrun and its police station fortress. Despite their stealth, the attackers were detected by Arab lookouts and sustained numerous casualties. But the battle seemed to be going in the direction of the *Haganah*, with the 71st moving steadily past the nearby Trappist Monastery, through the town of Latrun and toward the perimeter of the police station.

Werner and his compatriots fought for hours and exhaustion set in. The weight of their rifles felt like cannons, and their taut muscles ached for relief. Even so, they followed Zef's command. Tremulously, Werner and several dozen other *Haganah* fighters approached the police station. Each prayed he would not be mowed down by the relentless rifle fire coming from inside the station.

Luck was with the invaders and they were finally close enough to level their weapons at the police station's Arab defenders. Patiently, they held their fire, waiting for Zef to direct the flamethrowers to spray the roof with a deadly layer of flames.

Finally, Werner heard Zef give the order and saw the stream of fire shoot toward the roofline.

Weapons ready, Werner and the others prepared to storm the police station. Then, the unexpected occurred. The flamethrowers had set the front of the police station ablaze, and the flames from the fire acted like outdoor Klieg lights, enabling the police station's defenders to make out the profiles of the attacking *Haganah* fighters. Sickeningly, Werner saw his fellow fighters mowed down like illuminated targets in a dark shooting gallery.

Observing the carnage, Zef yelled out the order to fall back, while he and several others covered the retreating soldiers. As Werner ran for cover, his heart pounding uncontrollably, he looked back over his shoulder. With relief, he noticed the three fighters who had remained with Zef were safe and running for shelter. However, Zef had remained to cover their withdrawal. As Werner looked on with horror, he saw Zef's body jerk uncontrollably as he was cut down by machine gun fire.

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The second battle for Latrun had been a failure. There would be other attempts, but the *Haganah* leadership knew that it could not capture the fortress. Yet, the fate of Jerusalem hung in the balance.

As if an all-knowing providence had seen enough, just days later, a *Haganah* patrol identified an alternative route high above the Latrun fortress. With two ancient bulldozers and the sweat of hundreds of Jewish laborers, the *Haganah* hewed out a passage through the rock-strewn terrain to Jerusalem. Soon, word of the road building reached the Legionnaire's command center at Latrun. However, so difficult was the task that T. L. Ashton, the British colonel in command of the Arab Legion forces, believed that the road could not be built. Stubbornly, he refused to authorize his Legionnaires to attack what he considered to be a fool's task.

A week later, the fool's task was completed and the first relief trucks to traverse what had become known as the *Burma Road* en-

tered Jerusalem. The fighting had turned in favor of the Jews. Early the following year, Werner and his fellow *Haganah* fighters had cause for elation as the war for independence, as it became known, came to a close, with the battle lines of the contending forces enshrined in a series of armistice agreements signed on February 24 by Israel and its Arab foes.

Chapter 29
In Boston, Success and Despair
August 1953–June 1957

As he arrived early for business at his office near Beth Israel Hospital, Jonathan could think only of the pile of loans he had just signed to outfit his new medical practice. Thanks to the GI Bill, Jonathan had paid for his last two years of medical school at Tufts with little difficulty. But his meager wages as an intern and later as a resident at Beth Israel Hospital enabled Sarah and him to save barely any money for the five years since completing his schooling. The remaining money from Mrs. Zorrofsky's bequest had been spent on the physical therapy degree Sarah had earned at Boston University's Sargent College.

Jonathan looked at the waiting room, his receptionist's alcove, his office and the examination room, wondering how three-and-a-half small rooms could cost so much in rent. Jonathan and Stan Rothman, who was now a full-time professor at Boston University School of Medicine, had spent the last year discussing the pros and cons of Jonathan opening an office of his own. Since Stan's professorship prevented Jonathan and him from opening a medical practice together, Stan was convinced that the next best thing was for Jonathan to do it on his own and obtain privileges at BU. Jonathan decided to take the plunge. On this morning, he had little time to ruminate over finances, as the first of his eight new patients was scheduled to arrive in less than an hour.

Just down the street at Beth Israel Hospital, Sarah was beginning her morning in the hospital's newly-established physical therapy department. She had a heavy patient load that day but she could hardly keep her mind on her business, so excited was she

over the opening of Jonathan's new office. She had made all of the decorating decisions for the office and she knew every square inch of it. She was proud of her husband and she looked forward to the recognition that would come once Jonathan took his rightful place in the pantheon of Jewish doctors in the Greater Boston area.

Sarah's expectations were not misplaced, for Jonathan had shown all the signs of being a runaway professional success within the Boston medical community. He had graduated from Tufts Medical School with honors. He had received rave reviews from the senior residents and attendants at Beth Israel Hospital, where he had landed a prestigious residency in vascular surgery. Many of the patients who were scheduled for his first day of private practice had been referred by colleagues at Beth Israel who couldn't wait to start sending him patients.

However, Jonathan's professional success was not matched by his success at home. By any reasonable observation, Sarah and he had a good marriage. They were each caring and took pride in one another's accomplishments. Sarah's delight in seeing her husband called to the stage to receive his medical degree was easily matched by Jonathan's joy in seeing his wife receive her graduate degree in physical therapy. But something was missing.

For sure, Jonathan regaled in his wife's beauty and received with pleasure the admiring compliments of his friends and colleagues. Hardly a party took place when Sarah wasn't the most attractive woman present. For her part, Sarah could not have been more excited about having a husband who was so highly acclaimed at such an early stage in his career. But they both knew that the indefinable essence that binds marriages together was barely present in theirs.

From time to time, each had conveyed concerns to the other. On those occasions, they forthrightly wondered out loud whether they had made the right decision in marrying after knowing one another for so short a period of time. But they had preferred to

stay together, perhaps out of convenience. Each had been so busy building a career that the turmoil of starting over as singles was too much for either of them to contemplate. So they had remained together, enjoying, when they could, what was not an unpleasant relationship. Indeed, aside from the gnawing sensation that something was lacking, their life together had its advantages and its charms. They were the couple that dazzled at social gatherings, and their sex life did not go unsatisfied.

To make additional money, Sarah worked one day every other weekend for an upscale massage parlor. Using her physical therapist's knowledge of the body, she became a star in the world of massage. At home, she had put her talents to good use, particularly on those days when Jonathan returned to their apartment tense and exhausted from a string of long surgeries. Caringly, Sarah would help him take off his surgical greens and escort him to their bed where she would position him face down. Then she would let her fingers take over, gently and then energetically massaging Jonathan's tense muscles, first his head, then his neck and shoulders, then his back and buttocks.

When she reached Jonathan's buttocks, Sarah fingers took on magic as she rhythmically wove patterns up and down each one, sometimes gently and sometimes roughly. With each passing of her fingers, Sarah knew that Jonathan was experiencing pleasure just as her own excitement heightened.

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On a Thursday, three weeks after the opening of his office, Jonathan arrived home late and tired. As soon as he set foot in the doorway, he was delighted to notice that every vase in the apartment had been filled with flowers and that lighted candles cast inviting shadows everywhere. Before he had a chance to say anything, Sarah began to help him take off his clothes and Jonathan began to fantasize about the ritual that was about to take place.

Slowly, Sarah began to massage him in her customary manner.

But when she came to Jonathan's buttocks, she held back, not wanting to unduly excite him. For, tonight, when she turned her husband over, she wanted him to enjoy the union of their bodies as never before.

That Sarah had something of importance to say was clear to Jonathan as soon as he rolled over and looked up at his wife. Slowly, Sarah rose over him and, without putting a prophylactic on him, gently straddled Jonathan's loins. Jonathan was about to say something, but he found himself caught hopelessly in the pleasure of the moment. As he looked at his wife's sweet face and lovely eyes, she began to move rhythmically, her round breasts swaying as she moved.

Jonathan was in such an ecstatic realm that he almost did not hear Sarah say, "Jonathan, let's make a baby. It's been long enough. I'm now 27, and we need something more than what we have." Jonathan had thought about children and was not surprised by or disapproving of Sarah's entreaty. Equally importantly, Jonathan did not want Sarah to stop her exquisite undulations. He looked up at his beaming wife and nodded.

After it was over, Sarah threw her arms around her husband. She was so choked with emotion. At seeing Sarah's reaction, Jonathan was overcome by the momentousness of what they both hoped was taking place. Stroking his wife's face, he promised her that they would try for as long as it took and that their baby would come into the most loving family ever. For a long time they embraced, each thinking about the wondrous domestic future that lay ahead of them. Finally, Jonathan nodded off to a deep sleep.

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There is a joke that the Jewish New Year festival of *Rosh Hashanah* never comes at the right time of year due to its inconvenient proximity to the end of summer and the beginning of the hectic school year. But for Sarah, *Rosh Hashanah* 1953 came at just the right time.

Not since the days of sitting around Mrs. Zorrofsky's *Shabbat* dinner table had Jonathan found the need to express his Judaism through communal prayer. Sarah and he had, nevertheless, joined a synagogue, perhaps out of a need for appearances, but mostly because they both thought it was the appropriate thing to do. Now it was *Rosh Hashanah* and they both thought it important to be present at synagogue, if only for the first day of the New Year service, and for *Kol Nidre*, the evening service that preceded *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

Jonathan and Sarah arrived early on the day of *Rosh Hashanah*. As they strode down the center aisle of the main sanctuary of Congregation *Mishkan Tefilah* in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Sarah paused to consider with joy the life that had taken hold in her womb. She hadn't yet begun to show but by the manner in which she carried herself, she wanted everyone to know that something special was happening to Jonathan and her.

After services, as Jonathan and she introduced themselves to the rabbi, Sarah waited as patiently as she could before she communicated her good news. When her opportunity came, she announced it so gushingly that the rabbi could hardly contain his amusement. He graciously offered his warmest congratulations.

Sarah's pregnancy went well. At six months, she gave notice at Beth Israel so that she could spend time preparing for the baby. In May, Sarah gave birth to a lovely baby girl whom Jonathan and she named Helena in honor of Jonathan's mother, Hannah. One month later, Sarah and Jonathan moved into their first house—a small bungalow in the Boston suburb of Newton. They were not in one of the tonier sections of Newton since those areas were still off limits to Jews. But they loved their new yellow house with light green shutters, and could not have been happier moving into a mansion.

Little Helena had a copious head of blond hair almost from birth, and it was clear she was going to favor her mother. As the

months whirled by, Helena progressed from one gratifying stage of early childhood to the next. Gradually, her neck muscles grew stronger and she supported herself. Then, she held her own baby bottle. Soon, she sat upright in her highchair and made noises that, in a leap of motherly faith, Sarah construed as having profound meaning.

In a flash, eight months went by and Jonathan and Sarah were looking forward to Helena crawling and beginning the process of standing up and walking. But that didn't happen. Instead, their little girl had problems maintaining the progress already made. She was now having difficulty sitting in her highchair, and holding her bottle became an impossible task. At night, she stiffened in her sleep so that her limbs required limbering when she awoke.

At first, Jonathan and Sarah dismissed what they were observing. But, when Helena's eye movement and alertness began to lessen, Jonathan and Sarah became alarmed beyond any fear either experienced during the awful years of the war. Jonathan asked Stan Rothman to examine the baby. Stan immediately expressed concern and urged Jonathan and Sarah to contact a friend of his who specialized in pediatric motor problems. Jonathan and Sarah quickly moved to set up an appointment with the pediatric neurologist. They had to wait an agonizing two weeks before seeing the specialist. For both Jonathan and Sarah, those two weeks were the most difficult they had ever spent.

On the day of the appointment, Sarah carefully bundled Helena so that she would not be cold despite the harsh February conditions. Jonathan carried Helena to their car and tried to stimulate her along the way, but she was unresponsive. When they arrived at the doctor's office on Newbury Street, the doctor's receptionist greeted them warmly. At length, Dr. Harry Greenfeld, a kindly-looking man of about 60, emerged from his office and ushered Jonathan and Sarah into his office. Sarah held the baby as they entered the office.

"Dr. and Mrs. Sternbloom, I'm very pleased to meet you. Your pediatrician has forwarded Helena's medical records and I have spoken to our mutual colleague, Stan Rothman, so I know a little bit about your daughter's case. But I would like to hear from each of you what you have observed over the last few months."

"Thank you," said Jonathan. "I'll go first but I expect that my wife will have more to say, as she spends the most time with our daughter." Then, Jonathan spoke. He was so filled with emotion that his words came haltingly. But he managed to choke back the inexpressible pain he was experiencing and spoke as objectively as he could about how his daughter had declined over the past few months.

When Jonathan finished, Sarah started to speak, but uttered only a few words before she started sobbing. Dr. Greenfeld quickly rose from his chair and walked around to where Sarah was sitting. He put his hand on Sarah's shoulder and tried to speak as comfortingly as he could. "Mrs. Sternbloom, your husband has told me about everything I need to hear. There's no reason for you to go through the ordeal of repeating what he has said. I think I've enough information. May I take Helena into the examination room and examine her?"

"Of course," stammered Sarah, still sobbing uncontrollably. Tenderly, she handed her unmoving child to the doctor and buried her head in Jonathan's shoulder.

Ten minutes later, Dr. Greenfeld returned to his office, holding Helena. The look on the doctor's face told Jonathan and Sarah all they had to know, but they listened carefully as he spoke. "Dr. and Mrs. Sternbloom, I wish it were otherwise, but your daughter is gravely ill." At this, Sarah sobbed more loudly as Jonathan choked back his tears.

"Let me start from the beginning. In the early 1880s, two physicians, one a Brit named Tay, and later, an American named Sachs, made similar discoveries. They had each been observing

children around Helena's age who, like her, were experiencing decreased muscle function, lassitude, lessened eye movement and inattentiveness. They wanted to know why. Well, they were unable to answer why, but they did make two discoveries. First, the symptoms they observed were often accompanied by a red spot on the retina of the eye and second, the catastrophic consequences tended to repeat themselves within families."

Still crooked in Jonathan's shoulder, Sarah continued to sob. Jonathan did what he could to comfort her, but he also needed answers. "Dr. Greenfeld, I deal with very sick patients every day. I try to be direct with them. I would appreciate if you would be the same with us."

"Of course. When I examined one of your daughter's eyes, I observed a cherry red spot on her retina. In combination with the precipitous decline in her muscle activity and unresponsiveness, the red spot leads me to believe that your daughter is suffering from the malady first observed by Tay and Sachs, what we now call Tay-Sachs Disease."

"I'm afraid I remember hearing something about that during one of my rotations. Are you sure?"

"Sadly, I'm quite sure. But let me ask each of you a question about your family background that might help in making a definitive diagnosis. Did either of your families experience children who died at a very young age?"

The question hit Jonathan like a baseball bat striking his solar plexus. Of course, he had a sister whom he had not known very well, but who died at a very young age. "Yes," said Jonathan. "I had a sister named Gisela who died early in her childhood."

"How about you, Mrs. Sternbloom?"

Hoping that maybe she had been thrown a lifeline, Sarah unmasked a flicker of hope as she looked at Dr. Greenfeld. Shaking her head, she said, "No. There have been no early deaths in my family of which I am aware."

Dr. Greenfeld was giving consideration to Sarah's answer when Jonathan turned to Sarah. "When Dr. Greenfeld was referring to your family, I don't think he was limiting himself to your mother and father. I think he intended to include the offspring of your grandparents, which would include your uncles and aunts. Is that correct Dr. Greenfeld?"

"Yes. In that vein, do you have anything to add?"

"Yes. I know Sarah's aunt, Saundra, and her two cousins, Randy and Charlie. Before they were born, Saundra lost two young children. She told that to my father and he passed it along to me. If, as you have suggested, this disease runs in the family, then it might have been passed down from Sarah's grandparents to Sarah's aunt. It might have skipped Sarah's mother before finding its way to Sarah."

"What do you mean?" erupted Sarah in a sobbing cry of despair.

"I mean, sweetheart, that some conditions skip generations. If your grandparents had the condition, they may have given it to your aunt, but skipped your mother. Then, it might have been passed on to you. By contrast, it appears that I became a carrier directly from my mother. That means we both could be carriers of the condition, and that's how our baby got it."

"Oh, God," moaned Sarah, burying her face in her hands.

Jonathan now looked at Dr. Greenfeld forlornly. "What do we do from here? "Is there any hope?"

"I'm so sorry. If my diagnosis is correct, and I believe it is, there is no hope. Let me ask you a delicate question. Can you afford professional help for Helena?"

"What do you mean?" moaned Sarah.

"I mean that this condition is going to get worse and will likely become far more devastating than the two of you can handle on your own. It would be best if Sarah were placed in the care of professionals."

"You want to institutionalize my baby?" sobbed Sarah.

"Yes. That's what I am suggesting. I wish I could say it in a kinder way. I'll provide your husband and you with some literature. Please think about it. You do not have much longer to go before Helena's needs will exceed your ability to care for her on your own."

Broken and bereft, Sarah and Jonathan thanked Dr. Greenfeld, whose ashen face reflected the difficult exchange that had just taken place. With Helena again bundled, the Sternblooms left the doctor's office and headed out into the certainty of a sad future.

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Helena's little body held out for a full year following Dr. Greenfeld's diagnosis. At first, Jonathan and Sarah visited Helena regularly at the pediatric nursing facility where she had been placed. As Helena's condition deteriorated and her ability to recognize her parents vanished completely, the visits became more painful. After three months of seeing their baby's condition degrade catastrophically, Jonathan and Sarah could hardly endure the thought of visiting the nursing home. They willed themselves to go once a month, if for no other reason than to complete the endless stream of paperwork and to meet with the facility's chief physician.

Helena's disease affected Jonathan and Sarah more than they could have imagined. The happiness that had been their home after Helena's birth rapidly became the scene of endless and worsening sorrow. Their days were spent going through the motions of work, and their nights were no more than a chance to escape the torment of their days. They tried to be supportive of one another, but their sorrow was so deep that few words of comfort made an impression. They were drifting apart and there was nothing that either of them could do about it.

On a cold Boston afternoon in January 1954, Helena Sternbloom passed away. The official cause of death was pulmonary failure. In fact, the cause was the failure of every biological system

of her little body. Jonathan and Sarah were crushed and might not have endured the funeral and burial of their daughter had it not been for Charlie and his wife Diane, who flew to Boston so they could lend their support.

It was not that Charlie and Jonathan had remained that close. True, they talked with one another at least once a month and each regarded the other as his best friend. But it was the connectivity Charlie personified that made it so important he be with Jonathan and Sarah in their time of need. As Jonathan's oldest friend and Sarah's first cousin, Charlie provided both a link to their past and a means of confronting their future.

Many of Jonathan and Sarah's friends and colleagues attended the funeral. However, the mourning couple wanted the burial to be a private affair with just Stan, Charlie and Diane present. Nothing that Jonathan had ever experienced—not the sadness of losing his parents or the horrific circumstances of the camps—prepared him for the moment when Helena's coffin was lowered into the ground. Sarah was inconsolable with grief. With the support of Stan, Charlie and Diane, the grieving parents somehow made it through. In the end, Jonathan and Sarah found the strength to say goodbye to their sweet daughter. They each shoveled a scoop of dirt on her grave, as dictated by tradition.

After the burial, the two couples returned to Newton where Jonathan and Sarah did their best to be gracious under overwhelmingly difficult circumstances. Unexpectedly, Diane turned out to be the perfect antidote to the sadness of the moment.

After their first child, Diane had stopped working at her father's law firm so that she could stay at home with Seth, their only son. Now, three daughters later, Diane was the consummate mother of four and, as it turned out, a very funny raconteur of stories about her children.

Diane was also a fine improvisational cook. While Sarah submitted to exhaustion and took a nap, Diane made a beeline for

the local grocery store. When she returned, she headed for the kitchen and before long brought out a smoked salmon and onion soufflé, oven-hot garlic bread and a platter of sautéed asparagus. As the four mourners ate, they talked about old times in Europe and life in postwar California.

California was booming and Charlie was making a killing as an attorney specializing in real estate. Diane and he had purchased a lovely Tudor home in Westwood, a 15-minute walk from the UCLA campus. Diane's parents were both healthy and loved to take care of their grandchildren, as they were now doing while she and Charlie were in Boston. Saturday nights belonged to Diane and Charlie, and they often took the freeway to Santa Monica to dine at one of the charming restaurants that had sprung up along the coast.

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When Charlie and Diane left three days after the funeral, Jonathan and Sarah did their best to avoid regressing to the state they had been in before their daughter's death. They laughed at the retelling of Diane's stories about her family and they talked about starting afresh. Perhaps they would move to California, they mused. There, they would have Diane's humor to keep them entertained.

Or, maybe they should consider moving to Israel, suggested Sarah. Sarah confided that she'd been thinking about her brother and missed him more than she had admitted. The prospect of a fresh start in a new country might be just what they needed. For Jonathan, the thought of moving to Israel also sounded inviting. He had never forgotten his pledge to Rabbi Goldston that he would one day return to *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*. In the end, they remained paralyzed by the malaise that had overtaken them, and the attractiveness of moving to Israel or California became no more than a passing thought.

They tried mightily to make things right. They took up golf, going through the motions of buying clubs and taking lessons.

They tried bridge. Still, the hurt would not subside. Gradually, their sadness became ingrained and each began to expect little from the other. They continued to share the same bed but if either had amorous thoughts, those feelings were not disclosed to the other. When they dined together, the conversation was wooden and perfunctory. They drifted away from one another, and they were powerless to prevent it. For months, their primary communication took place when they said good night to each other and then curled up on opposite sides of the bed.

During this time, Jonathan sought out work as a palliative and an escape. The irony of behaving just as his father had following his mother's disappearance did not escape him. Jonathan's practice had grown considerably since completion of his residency and his patients had to wait three or four weeks to get an appointment. Now, as Jonathan began to arrive at work earlier each day and leave later each evening, the wait had lessened to just one week.

Jonathan was so busy that he failed to pick up any of the signs of the affair in which Sarah was becoming deeply involved. When she revealed that she had been seeing a younger man, a senior resident at Beth Israel, Jonathan felt more surprise than anything else. When, soon after, Sarah asked for a divorce so that she could marry the resident, Jonathan felt little emotion—just an overwhelming sense of emptiness.

Jonathan did not object to the divorce and Sarah did not demand much in the way of marital assets. They were divorced, with little legal assistance other than some routine documents prepared by an attorney. The divorce became final in the second week of June. Soon afterward, Sarah and her paramour were married. One month later, the new Mrs. Sarah Kaufman and her husband were picking up stakes and moving to Chicago, where Dr. Kaufman had joined a pulmonary practice.

Alone in what had been both Sarah's and his house, Jonathan mentally waved goodbye to his beautiful wife and reflected on

how events had come to such a pass. He had little time to ruminate as the telephone rang loudly. There had been a multi-car crash on Route 128 and many of the patients were being routed to Beth Israel. Jonathan's services were urgently needed. Jonathan lived to care for his patients, but he also enjoyed the stature that came with his position. As he hurried through the living room toward the front door, Jonathan tried to persuade himself that his professional status and achievements were all that were required for a happy life. However, one look at the picture of Sarah that still adorned the mantelpiece was enough to remind him of the emptiness and loss that pervaded his existence.

Chapter 30
A Surprise Visit
October 1967

More than a decade had passed since Jonathan and Sarah's divorce. For Jonathan, there had been affairs, but nothing serious and he was fast resigning himself to being a bachelor. All in all, Jonathan had found some degree of contentment in his solitary life.

Jonathan kept in regular contact with Charlie. When Charlie informed him that Diane had heard from Sarah and that Sarah had delivered a healthy baby girl and then another, Jonathan felt happiness for his former wife.

His lack of hostility also extended to Leslie. Early on, he had accepted an invitation to visit Charlie and Diane in Los Angeles, even though Charlie said that Jonathan would likely see Leslie and Randy during his stay. When Jonathan was reintroduced to his former fiancée and her husband, Jonathan greeted them tentatively but warmly as one might greet estranged relatives where the cause of the estrangement has long been forgotten. At Leslie and Randy's home, Jonathan spent hours poring over albums bulging with photos of their now-grown children. There had been many such visits since that time.

So well had Jonathan fit in with the two Brody households that they entreated him to remain in Los Angeles and move his practice. But Jonathan demurred. Below the surface, something continued to gnaw at Jonathan. He knew that the answer did not lie in California.

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Following Israel's overwhelming victory against the four Arab foes who had mobilized against it in June 1967, Jonathan felt a shared sense of pride with Jews from all over the world. No longer was the Jewish image one of victimhood, of lambs being led to the slaughterhouses. Out of the ashes of the concentration camps, a small but powerful country had arisen against all odds. That country had defeated the combined military might of its most implacable Arab enemies. It had reclaimed the entirety of its ancient capital of Jerusalem and the lands on the West Bank of the Jordan, where its ancestors had lived and followed the laws of God's *Torah* 3,000 years before.

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As is frequently the wont of men approaching 50, Jonathan often found himself reflecting on his past—reflections of his summer at *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*, the war years and, more and more, his halcyon but ill-fated time with Lara. *What had happened to her?* He had never understood and, of course, he had never known.

One Sunday morning in August when Jonathan was drinking iced tea and caught up in his ruminations, the telephone rang. It was a call from Israel. After Jonathan listened to the heavily-accented English for a moment or two, he could hardly believe his ears. Then an unrestrained smile leapt across his face. Against all odds, the caller was Janós Herskovitz, Jonathan's first cousin from Danzig whom Jonathan had presumed dead all these years. Janós had been living in Israel and had taken the name Jakob Ben Avram.

Jakob said that he had thought about Jonathan for a long time. Only recently had Jakob discovered Jonathan's whereabouts from an article in a medical journal that mentioned his name. Jakob said that he would be coming to the United States as part of an Israeli government-sponsored diplomatic mission. The purpose of the mission was to tell the story of the recent Arab-Israeli war, now being called the Six-Day War, to Jewish Federations in eight

US metropolitan areas. One of his stops was going to be Boston and he was excited at the prospect of seeing his cousin.

Jonathan didn't know where to begin with his questions. Before he got too far, Jakob cautioned him that the call was very expensive and that Jonathan could ask all his questions when the two of them met. Happily, Jonathan agreed to a time to meet and eagerly awaited Jakob's arrival.

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Fall in Boston that year was unusually beautiful. The leaves on the trees had just begun to turn. The entire Boston area was ablaze in color as Jonathan drove Jakob to Newton, pointing out landmarks and eagerly asking questions along the way.

Jakob was so consumed by the beauty of the fall colors and the sparkling waters of the Charles River that Jonathan had to nudge his cousin to get him to start talking. "Jakob, you must tell me everything. You can start by telling me where you learned to speak English."

Finally, they arrived in Newton. Jakob marveled at Jonathan's surroundings: the size of the house, the fully-equipped kitchen with its stylish cherry wood cabinets, the crystal chandelier in the dining room and the handsome study with its wall of medical books.

"Please, Jakob. I'll show you everything in the house, but you have to talk."

"Of course. Before I start, let me look at you again for a moment or two. Also, where are my manners? I have gifts for your family. Where is your wife, your children?"

Deflated, Jonathan told Jakob about Helena's diagnosis and how the child's death had devastated Sarah and ultimately destroyed their marriage. "I'm so sorry," responded Jakob, obviously shaken by Jonathan's disclosures. "My wife, Hadar, and I have four children and I'm so thankful to God for every moment I share with them. You know Jonathan, Tay-Sachs is a disease that affects us

Ashkenazi Jews disproportionately. In Israel, we have been doing research on this terrible affliction. We think we are not too far from being able detect the disease's presence in the fetus, allowing the parents to decide whether they wish to end the pregnancy."

"Yes. I think the same might be taking place here in the United States. But how would you know so much about such research?"

"Ah, didn't I tell you, Jonathan? Like you, I'm a medical doctor. That's how I found out about you."

"I had no idea."

"Yes. Actually, that's how I learned English. I studied medicine in South Africa. I regard that time as the start of my life."

"What do you mean?"

"May I sit?"

"Of course. Let's go into the living room."

Jakob sat down and once again was momentarily entranced by the surroundings—the stunning *Tabriz* rug on the floor, the large windows adorned with beautifully-gathered Roman shades and the large examples of modern art that adorned the walls. This time, he caught himself and launched into his story.

As Jonathan sat mesmerized, Jakob described the fire in the Warsaw Ghetto, the death of his family, the German soldier who had been the first—but not the last—man he had killed, the abuses to which he had been subjected in Treblinka, his escape from the camp, his long journey to Palestine, and his time with the *Irgun*. He started to describe what had happened at *Deir Yassin*, but choked up at the memory of the craven killing of which he had been a part. Collecting himself, he continued by observing that *Deir Yassin* had served as a time of self-realization. After his return from the bloodstained village, he described how he had laid down his rifle forever and committed to healing rather than killing. As it turned out, he confessed with satisfaction, he was a good student. After the armistice with the Arabs, he converted his good intentions to a medical degree.

Jonathan was awestruck. He started to tell Jakob about his own experiences in England, America and the battlefields in Italy, France and Belgium, but stopped his narrative short. "It's so beautiful this time of year in Boston. Let's take a short drive and then walk along the Charles River. We can continue our talk, I can point out some more landmarks and then we can stop for something to eat."

"Wonderful!" replied Jakob eagerly.

They walked under the breezeway leading to the garage, where, once again, Jakob caught himself staring, this time at a second vehicle that was parked in the garage—an enormous Cadillac convertible. "Jonathan, in Israel, some of our busses are not the size of that automobile!"

Jonathan laughed. "It feels even bigger with the top down. Let's try it." The two drove the short distance to Harvard Square, with Jakob seeking not to miss anything along the way. Parking was notoriously difficult on the Harvard College side of the river, so Jonathan parked across the river in Allston, near the Harvard Business School. They crossed the bridge on foot and began their walk along Memorial Drive. Jakob was charmed by the iconic, cupola-clad Harvard residence halls that dotted Memorial Drive and by the classic lines of the small sailboats that glided along the river, their skippers delighting in the brisk but satisfying October weather.

Observing as much as he could as they walked, Jakob struck a serious note as he turned to Jonathan. "How good you have it here."

"I imagine so," said Jonathan. "Doctors are very well paid in this country. But don't think everyone has it so good. Now I'm embarrassed. Can we shift gears?"

"Certainly," replied Jakob, hoping that he hadn't offended his cousin.

"Please tell me about Israel and what you hope to accomplish during your trip. I spent a summer in Palestine during the 1930s,

but I've not been back since. I've thought about returning, but something always gets in the way."

"I wish you had returned. It's a beautiful country that I think you would admire. We have reclaimed so much of the land that was once swamp or desert. We even have small farms that draw on underground water in the middle of the desert. Tel Aviv is a lovely city on par with any Mediterranean destination. The Old City of Jerusalem is now ours and having access to the Western Wall and the Temple Mount has had an incalculably beneficial effect on the Israeli psyche."

Turning toward his cousin, a look of satisfaction on his face, Jonathan acknowledged his pride in what Jakob was saying. He urged Jakob to continue.

"Our medicine is very advanced in Israel. I think you would be impressed with what we are doing."

"In what area do you practice?"

"I specialize in the new discipline of battlefield stress. I work with soldiers who have come off the battlefield physically intact, but with lasting psychological and emotional problems."

"I imagine you have a lot of that in Israel. We certainly have plenty of it here in the United States. Can you believe that we now have 700,000 soldiers in Viet Nam? It boggles the mind."

"It does. We, too, have had our share of losses, particularly in this last war. Over 100 of our most promising young paratroopers died in the fighting to take the Old City. In our small country, that is a staggering number."

"What do you think is going to happen now?"

"Except for the Old City, which we have annexed and made the capital of our country, we would love to trade land for peace. But, that is not going to happen any time soon. So, we now find ourselves as landlords over large areas of land inhabited by desperately needy Bedouin and implacably resentful Arabs."

"What are you going to do with the captured land?"

"Frankly, we don't know what to do with it for the time being. It is our best—and maybe only—bargaining chip with the Arabs, so we feel that we have to hang on to it. For the first time since our state was created, we have borders we can defend. But as you're probably aware, there is huge international pressure for us to give up the land, even though we won it in a defensive war fought against Arab aggressors who attacked us on all of our borders. Even as we speak, the British are trying to obtain Security Council agreement on a resolution that contemplates return of the land. We hope that, with United States backing, the resolution will recognize that any return to the 1948 Armistice borders will render us vulnerable to another attack by the Arabs and that the next time we may not be so lucky."

"A lot of people in America were impressed with your victory. I'm as hopeful as you are that the UN resolution will be nuanced enough to enable you to sue for peace in a way that provides the security you seek."

"Amen to that! But now, let me get to the purpose of our mission. We achieved a great victory in the war, but at a great cost. In addition to our fallen soldiers, we consumed much weaponry and materiel. We desperately need America's help to rearm and to prepare ourselves for what I'm afraid will be the next inevitable clash with the Arabs."

The two stopped in thought for a moment and gazed over at the Boston University side of the river, where the BU oarsmen were rhythmically rowing their shells through the wavy fall waters of the Charles. "How is the morale of the people?" asked Jonathan.

"It's a complicated question," responded Jakob. "On the one hand, our chests are puffed up with pride. Who would have guessed that we would have been able to destroy the entire Egyptian Air Force in one devastating bombing? Before the war, anyone predicting that we would wind up in control of the Egyptian Sinai and the Jordanian West Bank would have been certified as crazy.

Yet, that is exactly where we are today. We pleaded with King Abdullah to keep Jordan out of the war. We had no immediate goal to occupy the Old City, but Abdullah had already made a commitment to Egypt to fight us. When the dust cleared, we found ourselves with both the Israel of 1948 and the Israel of the *Torah*—Jerusalem, where Solomon built his temple to God; Hebron, where the patriarchs and matriarchs are buried; Jericho, where the walls fell to Joshua; and the desert, where a generation of Israelites wandered for 40 years as they shed their slave mentality."

"It does sounds like heady stuff," acknowledged Jonathan.

"On the other hand, our losses were so great and there is the ever-present fear that there will be a new war and that a new round of Jewish boys and girls will lose their lives. My oldest son, Shmuley—his real name is Samuel—will soon be entering the Israel Defense Forces. I worry all the time."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. There's no place else that I would rather be, although it wouldn't hurt for the government to pay us doctors a little more for what we do. Jonathan, why don't you come over and see for yourself? I would love to introduce my family to you, and I have many surgical colleagues who would be eager to hear about your work. It's been years since you've been to *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*. If it's like most *kibbutzim*, you won't believe the change.

Sheepishly, Jonathan stood still for a moment. "I suppose you're right. I should visit and I would love to meet your family. For now, let's walk back to Harvard Square and have lunch. Harvard is America's oldest college. In my view, it doesn't possess the beauty of Cornell where I went to school, but Harvard Yard is charming. The Square has lots of places where we can eat and I can hear more about your work and family."

Chapter 31
A Wedding Invitation
July 1973

After Jakob's visit, Jonathan gave much thought to going to Israel, but always something intervened. However, the visit had inspired Jonathan to keep up with events in Israel. He followed the United Nations debate in November of that year dealing with the land captured by Israel during the Six-Day War. Never had the UN, or any body for that matter, found the need to debate the return of land acquired in a defensive war. The irony was not lost on the newly-attuned Jonathan.

Stan Rothman had continued to be Jonathan's closest confidant over the years. Rothman was now retired from medicine, but he had become an ardent supporter of Israel. Now a widower, Rothman lived in an apartment in Brighton, not far from Jonathan. Jonathan visited him frequently to discuss medicine and the events of the day. As the 1967 UN debate unfolded, their discussion focused on the willingness of the United States to hold the line against the Soviet Union, America's Cold War adversary.

Over wine one night, they talked of the Cold War politics that seemed to infuse everything, especially the discussions now underway in the UN. "The Soviets have got to be awfully mad," observed Rothman. "After all, the Arab countries were using Soviet weaponry and they got their butts kicked. You can be sure that the 'bear' is growling back in Moscow and will want retribution."

"No doubt," replied Jonathan. "I'm sure they will be happy with nothing short of a UN resolution requiring Israel to return all of the land it acquired in the Six-Day War."

"You may be right, but I feel pretty sure the United States, with England in tow, is not about to give in. It's a good time to have Arthur Goldberg, at the UN, pleading the American position. The US knows that it is absurd for Israel to return to the indefensible borders that existed after the 1948 armistice. But, as with all things involving the UN, we'll have to wait and see."

In the end, Jonathan and Rothman were gratified to see that the resulting UN resolution, known as UN Resolution 242, failed to reflect the Soviet position. The resolution's first clause required that there be a "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict." But the provision did not require that *all* such territories be relinquished—a result that, as Rothman had observed, would have left Israel with borders insufficiently secure to withstand another attack. The import of the omission was brought home by the second and third key clauses of the resolution that contemplated the termination of all states of belligerency in the region and the "right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

Jonathan and Rothman were delighted at the outcome of the United Nations debate on the future of the land acquired by Israel during the Six-Day War. But their mood soured considerably the following year. In May, Israel's urbane ambassador, Abba Eban, announced to the UN Security Council that Israel would abide by UN Resolution 242 and was prepared to negotiate the implementation of the resolution with each of its Arab foes. However, it was clear from the outset that the Arab states had no such intention. This reality was brought home in September 1968 when the nations of the Arab League, meeting in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, issued a joint statement that later became known as the "Three No's"—no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no negotiations with Israel.

By then, Jonathan had assumed two medical posts that occupied most of his time and crowded out most of his thinking about Israel and everything else. Following Rothman's lead, Jonathan had accepted a teaching position at Boston University Medical School. In addition, Jonathan had agreed to serve as surgical consultant to the new strategic planning committee at Beth Israel Hospital. For years, it had been clear that Beth Israel was no longer just the professional redoubt for Jewish doctors who, before the hospital's creation, had been unable to obtain privileges in Boston's mainline hospitals. Now, Beth Israel wanted to leave behind its sectarian past and position itself for a leadership role among all of the hospitals in New England. Jonathan had been highly recommended to serve as surgical advisor. Despite concern about over-commitment owing to his new professorship and his ongoing surgical practice, Jonathan had given in to the enthusiastic welcome accorded him by the new Beth Israel committee.

As the era of the sixties merged into the seventies, Jonathan's life took on a fairly predictable routine. He derived satisfaction from his work, in particular his teaching, and devoted his time and energy to his medical interests. He also made a point of visiting Rothman regularly and of visiting Charlie and Diane on the West Coast for a four-day weekend at least once a year.

Charlie and Diane had a beach home in Santa Monica. When Jonathan visited, Charlie would often take off a day or two from work and together they would then make the short trek to the beach.

On one such occasion during the summer of 1973, Jonathan and Charlie had just returned home from a long beach walk. As they walked in the door, Diane greeted them and said excitedly that she had just been on the phone with Werner and Gwen. Their oldest, Efraim, had recently become engaged and he was to be married the third weekend in October, following the Jewish holidays. Werner and Gwen had called to invite Charlie and Diane.

When Diane told them that Jonathan was visiting, they had been insistent that Jonathan come as well.

"Why don't you join us, Jonathan?" suggested Diane, eagerly. "Neither of us has been to Israel and it will be fun to go with you."

"Absolutely," agreed Charlie. "It would be a blast. You could use the opportunity to visit Jakob's family, see your old *kibbutz* and have a wonderful time at the wedding with Werner and Gwen's family."

Jonathan pondered, then fumbled his way toward a weak excuse for not being able to go. "It sounds good, but I have my teaching responsibilities, my patient load and my work at Beth Israel. I can't just pick up stakes and go to Israel for what will probably amount to several weeks."

"Of course, you can, silly goose," responded Diane, reproachfully. "Charlie has told me on countless occasions about how valued you are at the medical school and at the hospital and how you've been doing both jobs without pay. They would probably love to reward you with a few weeks off. Even if they weren't, they couldn't afford to say no."

"Absolutely," said Charlie. "I used to be the same way with my law clients. I wouldn't allow myself to take time away from my law practice. But once I did, I realized the world continued to spin. You can find someone to fill in for you while you're away. And if you don't make the commitment now, you may wind up working yourself to death and never go anyplace except coming here for a long weekend or two each year."

"What's wrong with that?" countered Jonathan, consciously trying to change the conversation.

"Nothing. But you're not going to wiggle your way out of this one. If you come with us, you'll see people you haven't seen for decades and I know you're curious about Israel. And after the tragedy at the Munich Olympics last summer, Israel can use a boost in tourism. Come on. Say yes!"

A smile crept over Jonathan's face as he finally willed himself to say yes. "Okay. You've shamed me into it. I'll make the necessary arrangements and I'll come. If you'll give me Werner and Gwen's telephone number, I'll call them myself."

"Great! Let's celebrate. You may not have noticed back East, but our California wines are becoming first class."

Chapter 32
Israel, Through the Eyes of the Bride-to-Be
October 1973

Charlie and Diane's flight was scheduled to arrive at Newark Airport four hours before the departure of their connecting El Al flight to Tel Aviv. They had advised Jonathan to arrange for a flight from Boston that would give him an equal amount of time at Newark before the El Al flight. At first, Jonathan thought they had suggested so early an arrival in order to catch up before boarding the flight. But at Newark, as two Israeli security officers carefully went through every garment and personal item in both of Jonathan's large suitcases and then quizzed him interminably on the purpose of his trip, Jonathan understood that security was the driving force behind the need to arrive early.

Jonathan knew that El Al security—recognized as the best in the world—had been on heightened alert since the Munich massacre the preceding summer. As Jonathan watched the inspectors methodically going through his suitcases, he began to appreciate how much the Munich killings contributed to the Israeli sense of insecurity.

At length, Jonathan joined Charlie and Diane on the plane for their scheduled 10-hour flight to Tel Aviv. He sat between Charlie and Diane near the rear of the plane. The three conversed for about two hours before each started nodding off. About six hours later, Jonathan was awakened by an audible chorus of voices coming from the back of the plane. Jonathan got out of his seat to see

what was happening. To his surprise and delight, he observed about a dozen men reciting *Shakrit*, the morning prayers. The men wore prayer shawls and *tefillin*—small leather prayer boxes that were bound in a precise manner to the left arm near the heart and draped over the forehead.

As Jonathan watched and listened, he was transported back in time to Mrs. Zorrofsky's Shabbos table. He remembered how comforting the rituals of *Shabbos* dinner and the presence of family had been. Then, the morning service was over. The men took off their prayer shawls, rolled up their *tefillin* and returned to their seats. Once again, Jonathan was thrown back in time to the day his once devoutly secular father told him about attending synagogue services and learning to put on *tefillin*. Jonathan returned to his seat, deep in contemplation.

About 15 minutes before the end of the flight, the pilot announced they would soon be landing at Ben-Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. Jonathan, Diane and Charlie all strained to look out the window as the plane began its descent into Tel Aviv. Jonathan observed the lush, cultivated area that surrounded the airport. A few minutes later as he emerged from the plane, he realized the entire airport was surrounded by orange groves. *Nothing is wasted here*, he thought to himself. He entered the terminal for another round of questioning and credentials review.

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Two hours later, Jonathan, Charlie and Diane were at the home of Yaron and Gila Kreisler. After a few references to "Werner" and "Gwen," the three guests adjusted to the Kreisler's Hebrew first names. The whole Kreisler family had assembled, including their son, Efraim, the soon-to-be groom, and his fiancé, Haviva. After hours of eating and catching up, Jonathan found himself sitting opposite Haviva.

Haviva was two years older than Efraim and had immigrated to Israel only a few years earlier. She was pleasant looking with

an oval face and clean features, but it was her eyes that told the story: brown and bright, they flashed with both intelligence and adventurousness. Before coming to Israel, Haviva, whose name was Harriet before she Hebraized it, attended law school in the United States. Her family had waited until she completed her law studies and then had made *aliyah*. However, after passing the New York bar exam, Haviva decided to remain in the States so she could work at her dream job, a law position with the famed American Civil Liberties Union. But a visit to Israel to see her family had sold her on the land and she decided to leave her position at the ACLU and make *aliyah*, herself. She had met Efraim at an *ulpan*—a Hebrew language immersion program for recent immigrants—where Efraim taught when he wasn't working long hours on computer code. Efraim had been impressed with Haviva's intelligence and her quick grasp of the language, and it had not taken long for a romance to bloom.

"It looks like you're marrying into a wonderful family," said Jonathan, to break the ice.

"Yes. And from my point of view, they're getting a good deal, as well."

Aha, thought Jonathan, impressed by the young women's temerity. "What have you been doing in Israel and how do you like the country?"

"Of course. First, I love the country. The land is beautiful and varied, and the Israelis have done so much to reclaim areas that were swampy wastelands or uninhabitable deserts before 1948. But I'm concerned with what we're going to do with the land we won in the Six-Day War. Religious Zionists are clamoring to settle the lands comprising the West Bank and the Sinai, which I think is a bad idea."

"Why do you think such settlement activity is a bad idea? Israel was never the aggressor, but won the lands of the West Bank in a defensive war."

Haviva would have liked to respond politely to Jonathan's question, but her nature allowed her to communicate in only one way—frontally and pointedly. "I know you're being earnest, but it irks me that so many otherwise intelligent people miss the point. We have to keep some areas for security reasons, since the 1948 armistice lines left much of the country exposed to attack. But if we settle the West Bank, Gaza and the Sinai, what are we going to do with the million and a half Arabs who live there? They have one of the highest birth rates on Earth and hate us. It doesn't make sense. I wish we had been able to dispose of the Sanai a couple years back when Egypt's Anwar Sadat was talking about a possible deal. At least tried to give back Gaza, but Egypt wouldn't take it."

"I get your meaning, in general. But I'm a little skeptical about Sadat's willingness to deal. I remember reading in the US press that Sadat never really offered any concrete agreement for peace in exchange for land."

"That may be true, but I am still disturbed about settling the territories. Anyhow, back to your original question. I love the people here. There's no place on Earth that has such a diverse population, even in America. The people in Israel are stubborn and bossy, but you can't blame them. This is the first place in almost 2,000 years where Jews have been able to express themselves freely. Many came from horrible places where one misplaced word might have gotten them killed. So, I forgive them for their brashness and outspokenness. In fact, as you probably have deduced, I relate to it. More importantly, the Israelis I've met have been wonderfully friendly and energetic. I admire them so much for what they've accomplished in just 25 years, despite overwhelming odds. I'm so happy to call myself one of them."

"That's great to hear," replied Jonathan, beaming with pride.

"Thanks. As to what I'm doing here, I'm a civil rights lawyer by training and that is what I've been doing here. Despite what I

said about the wonders of the country, it has a lot of warts, or more politely, one might call them growing pains. I hope to do something about it. Call it *wart patrol.*"

"Like what?" asked Jonathan.

"I'm interested in both women's and minority rights. I don't regard myself as a feminist. But in Israel, there is a lot of gender inequality. It exists in the military and it shows up in the schools and in the workplace. I'd like to help balance the scales. I've been working with other women attorneys to publicize women's issues and to look for remedies in the courts when we see gender-based injustices taking place. I'm also interested in fair treatment for Israel's Sephardic Jews, those who do not come from Eastern Europe, and for the country's sizeable population of Arab Israelis."

"Very interesting. I've followed the civil rights movement in America. It's a tough row to hoe!"

"No less here. Women's rights present a whole array of difficult issues, and the issues are considerably more difficult when it comes to our Israeli Arab population. Don't get me wrong. There is no place else in the world where Arabs have as much freedom as they do in Israel. Israeli Arabs can say and print what they want, worship where and when they want, own property, receive a top-notch education, enter any profession, vote and become members of the *Knesset*. But there are still barriers to their success and immersion in the country. Some of them are our fault and some of them are attributable to the Arabs' own practices."

"For instance?"

"In general, there is so much distrust that it makes it difficult for the Arab population to blend in with the greater Jewish population. Take the military. It's hard to succeed in Israel if one hasn't served in the Israel Defense Forces. Call it an 'old boys' and, to a lesser degree, 'old girls', network. For Arabs, it's a real problem because none of them, except for the Druse, serve in the IDF."

"I can guess why, but I'd like to hear it from you, Haviva."

"Part of the reason is that most Arabs would not want to serve, and part of the reason is that the Jewish establishment is afraid of divided loyalties. Perhaps a kindly way of putting it is that the leaders of the IDF don't want to put Israeli Arabs in a position where they will have to fire on their fellow Arabs."

"That makes sense to me."

"Yes, but it still creates a barrier for the Arabs. They're also the victims of their own cultural practices, as well as ours."

"Such as?"

"Such as the fact that both they and we make it difficult for them to integrate socially and geographically. We tend to stay in our own communities and they tend to do the same. Also, Sharia law makes it hard for the Arabs to move ahead financially because of prohibitions on charging and paying interest. So, they have difficulty in financing construction projects and new businesses. Also, I mentioned that Israeli women continue to have barriers to overcome. Still, they attend university in large numbers and are beginning to enter most mainstream professions so they can add to their family's income. By contrast, the Arabs believe their women should stay at home with the result that half of their population is prevented from contributing to their economic betterment. Slowly, that is giving way as more Arab women become educated. But they have a long way to go."

"That's a lot to digest."

"Admittedly. But, we're not here to solve all of Israel's problems. Tell me about your plans."

"I've accomplished the first part of my plan. I got to learn a little about you and I'm very impressed."

"Sorry, Doctor. I don't blush easily, but thanks for the compliment."

"Okay, I'll lay off. Between now and your wedding next week, I plan to visit the *kibbutz* where I worked as a teenager. Also, I want to visit my cousin and his family in Haifa over the *Yom Kip-*

pur holiday. After that, I hope to spend a few days in Jerusalem and then top off the trip at your wedding."

"Good for you. I love Haifa because there, more than anyplace else in Israel, one can find Arabs and Jews living in the same community. What *kibbutz* are you visiting?"

"Ramah Gan. Have you heard of it?"

"I have. It's one of our largest and most successful agricultural *kibbutzim*. I think you'll be very impressed. When do you leave?"

"Tomorrow, after we tour Tel Aviv in the morning."

Chapter 33
Reminders of the Past and Concerns for the Present
October 1973

In Tel Aviv, Jonathan could hardly believe what he saw. When he was a teenager, Tel Aviv had seemed like a bustling metropolis. Almost 40 years had passed, and Tel Aviv had grown from a community of 150,000 to a thriving city of almost 375,000. Dizengoff Street was still a business hub, and the commercial part of the city fanned out in several directions. Most striking was the beachfront where high-rise hotels overlooked the Mediterranean in places that had been untouched stretches of sand during his earlier visit.

Yaron had spent most of his time with Charlie and Diane. He now asked Jonathan if he was up for a walk along the boardwalk connecting Tel Aviv to Old Jaffa. Jonathan agreed and the two men walked and reminisced as the bright blue Mediterranean sparkled to their right. Along the way, Jonathan noticed the almost endless variety of languages spoken by other strollers as they passed by. Fascinated, Jonathan turned to Yaron and asked, "How many languages do you think are spoken in Israel?"

"I don't know for sure," replied Yaron. "But if you want to be a lifeguard on the Tel Aviv waterfront, you have to speak at least four languages: Hebrew, English, French and German. When I take clothes to my tailor who came from Poland, I hear him speaking to customers in Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Polish, Russian, French and Hungarian. What we have in this country is a powerhouse of intellectual talent, linguistic and otherwise, just waiting to be harnessed. If we could put aside the money spent on defend-

ing ourselves against the Arabs and devote it to new industries, there would be no stopping us."

At length, they arrived at the ancient port of Old Jaffa. Side by side, Arabs and Jews tended to bakeries, stores and restaurants in the shadow of the salmon-colored façade of St. Peters, the iconic 17th-century church built by Frederick II of the Holy Roman Empire. At Yaron's urging, the two stopped to buy flatbread from an Arab food stall. The bread had been baked in an ancient cone-shaped clay oven called a *tabun* and was topped with fried eggs, za'atar and other exotic smelling spices. At the next stall, they each ordered a large glass of freshly-squeezed Jaffa orange juice and then sat down on a bench to feast. After their repast, they decided it would be wise to take a taxi back to Tel Aviv, lest the day get away from them.

Back in the city, they drove south to *Kibbutz Ramah Gan*. Yaron had telephoned the *kibbutz* in advance in the hope that some of its earlier residents, dating back to the summer of Jonathan's visit, might still be alive and able to talk to Jonathan. To the delight of both Yaron and Jonathan, Yaron discovered that Rabbi Goldston was still at the *kibbutz* and would welcome the opportunity to spend time with them.

As they approached the *kibbutz*, Jonathan could not believe how it had matured and expanded. In all directions, they could see citrus trees groaning with soon-to-be-harvested fruit. Soon they were delighted by the views of the rich blue Mediterranean, indicating they were approaching the heart of the community.

Jonathan expected to see the familiar semicircle of small buildings. Instead, he found the central square of a small city, replete with a large supermarket, specialty stores, a movie house, a cafe and a swimming pool complex. A *kibbutz* official named Reuven greeted Jonathan and Yaron. He said that Rabbi Goldston was napping, but that the rabbi had arranged for Reuven to take Jonathan

and Yaron for a short jeep tour. Tired but eager to explore the *kibbutz*, Jonathan and Yaron climbed into the vehicle.

As soon as they left the central square, Jonathan could see that the *kibbutz* he was looking at in 1973 was nothing like the one he had visited in 1935. Except for the dirt roads separating the crops in the fields, all of the streets were paved and the farm equipment looked new. The *kibbutz* was now electrified with outdoor lighting lining the streets. A large auxiliary generator was ready to take over in the event of a power disruption from the local grid. Where there had once been small canning and jarring facilities now stood factories with dozens of busy workers entering and leaving. In the fields, much of the physical work had been transferred from man and animal to machine, and the sound of farming engines buzzed everywhere.

When Jonathan and Yaron finished their tour, Chaim Goldston was waiting for them in the cafe. The rabbi was sitting in a wheelchair and an attendant was standing at the ready. As Jonathan and Yaron approached, the rabbi extended both of his hands and warmly clasped Jonathan's right hand. Jonathan introduced Yaron and the two of them sat down to talk to the venerable rabbi-turned-*kibbutznik*.

"So," said Rabbi Goldston to Jonathan, "you've finally decided to come back, as you long ago told me you would."

"At least for a short time. But, who knows? This country is so beautiful."

"Indeed, it is. No man could be more blessed than I, for I have been privileged to live here for over 50 years. I've seen the country grow from a collection of small population centers to the strong and resourceful nation that it is today."

"You do have a lot of reasons to be grateful," replied Jonathan.

"Yes, but there are also serious problems."

"Of course, being in an ongoing state of war is an awful thing."

"I'm not talking about the Arabs whose stubbornness often

makes me want to scream. I'm talking about problems in the Jewish community."

"Like what?"

"Like the fact that it's becoming increasingly difficult to keep young people on the *kibbutz*. After they have spent time with the Israel Defense Forces and university, it's tough to persuade them to return to the type of life we have to offer. As fewer young men and women return to the *kibbutz*, we risk the possibility that the way of life that made this country great may become a thing of the past. Even worse, many of them are seeking a more lucrative lifestyle in the United States. With every Israeli who sets off for Southern California, we experience not only a decrease in our population but also a drain of our talent and potential."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. It's human nature. What I really worry about is the land that we won from the Arabs in 1967. Yes, some of that land we need for security; and yes, Jerusalem has always been and must always be our eternal capital. But already, there is talk of a large-scale settlement of the administered lands. If that happens, it will be a big mistake. I don't know what can be done to appease the Arabs. However, I do know we will never win their hearts by settling property that they consider their sacred land, even though we won it fair and square."

Jonathan's mind flashed back to his conversation with Haviva and was about to respond when Rabbi Goldston waved his hand dismissively. "Enough of my chatter! Tell me about you."

Jonathan started telling Rabbi Goldston about his life. After about 20 minutes, the old rabbi began to nod off. Jonathan got up from his chair, adjusted the rabbi's blanket and then bent down and kissed Rabbi Goldston on the forehead. The rabbi looked up, smiled and fell asleep.

Jonathan and Yaron returned to the car and began their drive north, eventually connecting with the road to Haifa. Jonathan

asked Yaron what he thought about the sentiments expressed by the rabbi. To Jonathan's relief, Yaron was more upbeat. "I don't challenge anything said by Rabbi Goldston. It's true, and I know that Haviva believes it. But as one who fought in the War of Independence and whose family has fought in all of the subsequent wars, I see it a different way."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean if you look on the bedroom bureau of any house or apartment in Israel, you will almost always find a picture of a loved one who fell during one of our many wars. Some of us may be voting with our feet to leave the country. But most of us are bound to this country by blood, history and the firm knowledge that Israel is the fulfillment of the Zionist dream—a place where Jews can be safe no matter how dangerous the outside world."

Yaron glanced at Jonathan for a reaction. Sensing that Jonathan wanted to hear more, Yaron continued. "During the War of Independence, my buddies and I came under heavy fire as we tried to free the road to Jerusalem. We survived only because of the selfless act of a man whom we knew only as Zef. He was one of the few survivors of Auschwitz. He had a pregnant wife and a young child but he willingly covered our retreat, knowing it probably meant his own demise. I've thought about that moment many times during my life. Like all of us, Zef wanted to return to his family. However, more than that, I believe he gave his life hoping the rest of us would live on to fight another day so his wife and children would never have to worry about the deranged, delusional behavior of another Hitler."

"Zef must have been a remarkable man."

"Yes, he was. And this country is made up of many Zefs. Many are even represented by the current generation. Admittedly, some of them—maybe many of them—are leaving the egalitarian life of the *kibbutz* for the lights of the city. Some may even be leaving the country for Southern California. In the end, I believe the lessons

of our past will bind us together and help us to overcome our problems, both internal and external. I just hope we can get through this administered territory business. I share Rabbi Goldston's fear it is going to test us in more ways than we can imagine."

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Yaron and Jonathan sat silently for the duration of the drive. When they arrived in Haifa, it was dusk. Just as the sun was setting, they came to the home of Jakob and Hadar Herskovitz. The house was made of stucco, had a lovely front yard surrounded by a black wrought-iron fence, and was on a hill overlooking the city and the Mediterranean.

Jonathan and Yaron sat in the car for a moment and marveled at the stunning Mediterranean sunset. They walked to the back of the vehicle to remove Jonathan's luggage. All of a sudden, the front gate swung open and a small army of children scampered through, squealing with laughter and excitement. Soon Jakob and Hadar also emerged through the door and happily welcomed their two visitors and bade them enter the house. Only the Herskovitz's oldest child, Shmuley, whom Jakob had mentioned during his visit with Jonathan in Boston, hadn't been part of the welcoming committee. A lieutenant in the IDF, Shmuley was on tank patrol in the Golan.

Inside the house, the level of pandemonium exceeded even that which Jonathan and Yaron had experienced at the front gate. Two of Jakob and Hadar's four children had produced a total of five grandchildren. Except for the two who were too young to formulate questions in English, almost all were urgently voicing their inquiries at the same time. Jonathan succeeded in introducing everyone to Yaron, and then pleaded with the assembled members of the Herskovitz clan to ask one question at a time. Hadar proposed that they all sit down at the dinner table, where Jonathan could go around the table and invite each family member to ask a question.

After two hours, most of the questioners had satisfied their curiosity about the Viet Nam War, Richard Nixon and the Senate Watergate Hearings, the upstart New York Mets, and the amazing New York Knicks who had sent three players—Walt Frazier, Bill Bradley and Dave DeBusschere—to the all-star game the previous winter. At about 10:00 that evening, after all of the questions anyone could think of had been asked, the children were put to sleep. With a long drive back to Tel Aviv ahead of him, Yaron took his leave. Finally, Jonathan willingly followed Hadar to the room prepared for his visit.

Jonathan awoke to a beautiful fall day. Most of the members of the household had been up for several hours. The women and girls were busily preparing food for the *break fast* that would take place the following evening after 24 hours of fasting through the *Yom Kippur* holiday.

The Herskovitz family was not particularly religious. But *Yom Kippur*, when God is called upon to forgive the sins of his worshippers, was an unwavering exception. The family did not attend the evening *Kol Nidre* service that solemnly ushered in the holiday. But, on Yom Kippur day, they all went to the local synagogue and stayed for most of the day.

The next morning, the family, with Jonathan in tow, walked to the neighborhood *shul*. In the sanctuary, the men and women sat in separate areas. The cantor solemnly chanted the service and the congregants' refrain resonated with equal solemnity. Surprisingly, Jonathan felt very much at home, despite everything being chanted in Hebrew. *No matter*, he thought. *Just being here is satisfying enough. I wonder if that's how the non-observant majority of the population feels.*

As the congregation was preparing to take a break before *Mincha*, the afternoon service, a runner in military dress came charging through the synagogue and handed the rabbi a single sheet of typewritten paper.

The rabbi read the paper in silence and a concerned look crossed his face. He looked up from the paper. "Ladies and gentlemen," announced the rabbi in a somber manner, "I regret to inform you that at this very moment, Israel is under full-scale attack. More than 1,000 Syrian tanks under air cover have moved across the border into the Golan Heights in the north. In the southwest, the Egyptians have crossed the Suez Canal and established a bridgehead in the Sinai. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan has called the situation all-out war."

The rabbi thought for a moment, as if in self-debate, and then continued. "This is a holy day when we Jews remove ourselves from our labors and solemnly ask God to pardon our sins so we may go forward into the new year, cleansed of our transgressions. Ordinarily, we distance ourselves from all earthly forms of endeavor and devote ourselves to prayer so we may reap God's blessings. But the highest blessing of all is the preservation of life. As of this moment, the highest calling each of you can perform is to do whatever is required to protect the country and your loved ones. Anyone who is on leave from active duty or who feels the need to report to a reserve unit should leave immediately. The rest of you may remain here as your consciences dictate."

Jonathan could not understand much of what the rabbi was saying, since he had spoken in Hebrew. He turned to Jakob for clarification. "It's war," said Jakob, looking ashen. "Shmuley is on the front line, right in the middle of it."

Chapter 34
At Rambam Hospital, Jonathan's World is Shaken
October 1973

The next two days were harrowing for the people of Israel. Troops from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait joined the Egyptians and Syrians. Seven other Arab countries provided planes and other forms of support. The thinly-entrenched Israeli regular forces on both fronts could do little more than delay the onslaught until relief came from the country's military reserves.

Across the country, reservists ran to their units and family members waited at home for news from the front. In the halls of the *Knesset*, recriminations flew back and forth regarding how the country could have been caught so unprepared. But their conversations would have missed the point. Although few knew it at the time, word had reached Prime Minister Golda Meir earlier that day that a full-scale assault was underway. Not wanting to antagonize the American president, Richard Nixon, whose help she might need as the conflict progressed, Meir had chosen not to launch a preemptive aerial attack of the kind that had been so successful in 1967. The country was now paying the price for her accommodation.

In the Herskovitz household, as throughout the country, family members waited and prayed. The initial news had been so bad that there was a genuine fear that this time the Arab nations might succeed in their quest to drive the young nation into the sea. However, by the third day, virtually all of the country's reserve units had been mobilized and the tide was turning where it counted

most, in the Golan. In this tense environment, the phone in the Herskovitz's kitchen suddenly rang loudly.

Not wanting to answer but feeling compelled to do so, Jakob picked up the receiver and listened. After a moment, he yelled, "It's Shmuley! He's okay!" There was a visible sense of relief as everyone within hearing distance of Jakob's pronouncement either sobbed or hugged the nearest person. The family then settled back to allow Jakob to finish the conversation and report back. Finally, Jakob put down the receiver, concern etched on his face.

"Shmuley's fine. He's at Rambam Hospital with his friend Aaron."

"Aaron?" questioned Hadar.

"I should have said 'Roni.' You know, his fellow IDF lieutenant who has been with Shmuley in the tank corps since they both came of age."

"Of course," replied Hadar, with fresh insight into the matter. "Why are they at the hospital?"

"Roni's in bad shape. That was the reason for the call. Roni's tank broke down and he and his crew were trying to fix the problem. Shmuley's tank was right behind the disabled tank, so Shmuley stopped his tank and got out to see if he could be of help. While they were all outside trying to resolve the problem, they came under heavy fire. Roni was severely wounded right above the knee joint. Shmuley used his own shirt as a tourniquet. Shmuley looked around for an ambulance, but none were available. He phoned the tank brigade commander to ask if he could have a jeep to take Roni to the closest hospital with a Class One surgical center, which happened to be Rambam. The commander consented, provided Shmuley agreed to return to his tank unit once Roni was safe."

"How is Roni?" questioned Elana, the oldest of Jakob and Hadar's three daughters.

"Unfortunately, Shmuley says he's not very good. That's why Shmuley called before heading back to the front. He said the

surgeons at Rambam are swamped and they don't want to operate on Roni's leg until an experienced vascular surgeon becomes available. Shmuley's concerned that Roni's leg could be in danger because of the wait."

Looking at Jonathan, Jakob continued. "Last week, I told Shmuley you would be visiting. I also told him you were a very well respected vascular surgeon in Boston."

Jonathan was at full attention as Jakob continued. "So, the real reason Shmuley was calling was to see if you and I could drive to Rambam and do whatever was needed for Roni. I'm sorry to put you on the spot, Jonathan, but I have privileges at Rambam and I'm sure I could get you qualified in no time."

"How far is Rambam from here?" replied Jonathan.

"Fifteen or 20 minutes."

"What are we waiting for? Let's grab our bags and go fix Roni's leg."

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Owing to the reserve call up, the traffic in Haifa was busier than usual. As a result, it took Jakob and Jonathan almost an hour to reach Rambam Hospital. Once they arrived, Jakob introduced Jonathan to the hospital administrator who eagerly agreed to give Jonathan surgical privileges for the duration of the war. Quickly, they found the triage area where Roni had been heavily sedated and was lying on a gurney.

Carefully, Jonathan removed the sheet to look at Roni's knee and determine the extent of the young officer's injuries. Then, he first checked Roni's breathing to make sure he was strong enough to undergo surgery. Jonathan was struck by the handsomeness of the young soldier's face—the delicate features that belied Roni's status as a career soldier. Satisfied that Roni was stable, Jonathan began his examination. The blood vessels in the vicinity of Roni's knee had been severely compromised. The popliteal artery—the main blood vessel serving the area of the

wound—was so badly damaged that it could not be pulled together.

Jonathan looked up at Jakob and let out an involuntary whistle. "By placing the tourniquet on Roni's leg, Shmuley probably saved his friend's life!"

"What are you going to do now?" asked Jakob, who was seriously at a disadvantage since he had not been in an operating theater since his early rotations.

"The popliteal artery on his injured leg is too badly damaged to repair by just suturing. I'm going to have to do an arterial bypass. I'll have to use a graft from another part of Roni's body."

"From where?"

"From a part of the saphenous vein from the inside of his good leg."

"That sounds like two surgeries."

"Yes, for the price of one! As a result of the Vietnam War, we've learned a lot about these types of injuries in the United States. We're now experimenting with using artificial materials for the grafts, but we're still a few years away. Until that time comes, we have to do grafts using materials from the patient's own body. The procedure is called an interpositional vascular bypass."

"When do we begin?"

"He's heavily sedated, so we can begin any time. But I'm still going to need an anesthesiologist and a surgical nurse. If you've got pull in this place, now's the time to use it."

Jakob quickly took off in search of help. Before long, he returned with an anesthesiologist and a surgical nurse. Both were fighting off yawns, giving Jonathan pause for what he was about to do. Jakob had also obtained authorization to use one of the first-floor operating rooms and was holding a hospital dispensary prescription for the medicines and dressings he would need during the surgery.

With Jakob observing, Jonathan and his two sleep-deprived colleagues rolled Roni into the operating room. In a few minutes,

the surgery was underway. Owing to the delicate nature of harvesting Roni's saphenous vein to repair the damaged artery, the surgery took much longer than Jakob had expected. In the end, Jonathan thanked his exhausted colleagues and expressed optimism that Roni's leg would be saved.

By then, word had spread throughout the hospital of the presence of a renowned American surgeon. When Jonathan emerged from the operating room, he was besieged with requests to assist with or perform other surgeries. Jonathan agreed, and a suitably impressed Jakob left his cousin at the hospital and headed for home.

Jonathan worked until 5:00 in the morning, stopping only long enough to gulp down a cup of coffee and devour a sandwich. Exhausted, Jonathan remembered how Lara and he had used a linen closet as a bedroom at the DP camp. Without too much effort, he found an untended linen closet and fell into a deep sleep on a pile of sheets.

It was 10:30 in the morning when Jonathan woke. Quickly, he found a bathroom and washed up. Then, he checked to see where his various surgical patients were recovering and did follow-up rounds. To Jonathan's great satisfaction, the three patients he had worked on, in addition to Roni, were doing well. At noon, Jonathan worked his way to Roni's ward and checked in with the attending nurse, who told him Roni was still heavily sedated.

Jonathan walked into the room and saw a young nurse checking Roni's surgical dressing. When she heard Jonathan's footsteps, she looked up and smiled. In English, she asked, "Are you the doctor who worked on my brother?"

"Yes. Jonathan Sternbloom at your service. I hope you approve of my handiwork."

"Are you kidding? The entire nursing corps in the hospital is abuzz with your praise. Roni would have lost his leg if you hadn't been able to do that bypass. But excuse me; I'm so rude. My name

is Channy Gershensohn. I'm a nurse in the hospital, but this is not my ward. Your patient is my brother, Roni. I checked on him when he was admitted yesterday and I was alarmed. I had to return to my ward, and I've been worried sick ever since."

"I can understand that, but I assure you your brother is doing well."

"Thank you. Last night was terrible, with my husband on the front, my children staying with my mother and my brother fighting for his leg, and maybe his life. So, hearing that Roni is doing okay means so much to me. Have you heard anything new about the war?"

"Only that, despite initial heavy losses, we seem to be pushing back the Syrians and keeping the Egyptians at bay in the Sinai." As Jonathan answered Channy's question, he had a chance to look her over. She was attractive. But more than that, there was something intangible that Jonathan couldn't identify. He puzzled over the young woman, trying to discern what he was seeing. It gradually dawned on him.

One of the few items that Jonathan had received from his father's estate was a wedding picture of his father and mother, which sat on his bureau at home in Boston. Jonathan often gazed at the picture because it was the only memento he had of his mother, who was in her 20s when the picture was taken. The young nurse in front of Jonathan also appeared to be in her 20s. She bore an eerily striking similarity to Hannah. Even their names were similar.

Jonathan roused himself from his musings in time to notice that Roni was beginning to stir. Channy, too, noticed that her brother was showing signs of awakening. Immediately, she went to her brother's bedside, sat down beside him and gently stroked his forehead. Gradually, Roni opened his eyes. They were a crystalline grey that complemented his chiseled facial features.

Now that Roni was awake, Channy was overwhelmed with relief. She lovingly bent over to give her brother a kiss. As she did,

the delicate sterling necklace she wore under her blouse spilled out. Jonathan was focused on his patient and, at first, did not notice anything.

But then, Jonathan looked in Channy's direction and observed the necklace and the silver ornament that was attached to it. Jonathan was transfixed, as if some unearthly force had taken over his body. For a moment, he could only stare at the necklace. As his mind raced, he wondered whether he was seeing something real or imagined. *Am I in a dream? Am I looking at an illusion, a fantasy?* He felt as if his whole being had been frozen in time. Slowly, he regained his senses. It had to be real for all the obvious reasons. Yet, how could it be real? He blinked and looked again. There could be no mistaking what he was looking at. The ornament suspended from Channy's necklace was the distinctive, hammered silver Star of David his mother had given him—the star he had given Lara.

Jonathan's mouth felt too dry to speak. At length, he managed to do so. Nonchalantly, or what he hoped passed for nonchalance, Jonathan turned to Roni. "Well, Lieutenant, I see you've decided to join us. I hope you appreciate your welcoming committee."

"Yes. How is my leg and when can I rejoin my unit?"

"I've seen spaghetti that looked better than your leg looked yesterday. I'm afraid that returning to your unit may take a while. In time, you'll be fine, particularly with such a caring sister. By the way, Channy, that's an interesting Star of David you're wearing."

"My mother gave it to me and said it belonged to my father and, before him, my great grandfather in Poland."

"How interesting. Where's your father now?"

"I'm afraid he died a long time ago. I was only 2 and my father was a war hero. He died during the War for Independence."

"And your mother?"

"She's fine. As I mentioned, she's the one who's watching my children while I'm pulling double and triple shifts here at the hospital."

"I would like to meet the woman who has produced two such fine children. I think it would be a comfort to her if I told her first-hand that Roni was going to be okay."

Channy's face brightened. "I'm sure she'd love it! I was planning to join my mother and children for Shabbat dinner tonight. Her apartment is in the suburbs not far from here. I'm sure she would appreciate the company and hearing the good news about Roni. I'll call her."

"By the way, what is your mother's name?"

"Bracha.'"

Channy thought that Jonathan looked bewildered—maybe even distressed—at her response. She wondered what she had said to cause such a reaction. She looked at Jonathan with concern and then off-handedly noted: "It's Bracha now. It used to be Lara. However, when I was a teenager, I was very sick. After I recovered, Mother changed her name to Bracha. It means 'one who is blessed.' To this day, I often use the two names interchangeably."

Chapter 35
A Dream Clad in a Housecoat
October 1973

Roni was nodding off and Channy was eager to see her children. She contacted the head nurse to make sure she could leave and then placed the call to her mother. She reported that Bracha was busy with the children and that their talk had only lasted long enough for Channy to pass along the good news about Roni. Channy felt bad that she had not even mentioned Jonathan's name, but said that her mother was looking forward to meeting Roni's surgeon. Jonathan assured her that he could properly introduce himself when the time came. The two then signed out of the hospital and walked to the stop for the bus that would take them to Bracha's apartment building.

Along the way, they talked about Channy's family. Her husband, Alon, was an aeronautical engineer who worked for Israel Aerospace Industries. The two had met in the army. Both went to Haifa University after completing their military service, and Alon remained in the reserves. They married shortly after their graduation from college. Alon went on to do graduate work at Israel's prestigious Technion Institute of Technology, while Channy, following in her mother's footsteps, began her nursing career.

Jonathan asked Channy about Alon's whereabouts. Channy choked up for a moment, then replied that Alon's reserve unit had been called up at the start of the war. At first, she said, she heard little of Alon's location and was worried. However, when she arrived at the hospital the previous night, she bumped into one of Alon's fellow reservists who was being treated at the hospital. He assured her that Alon was fine.

Soon the bus turned off the main highway and onto a road that led to a small community of whitewashed houses and low-rise apartment buildings, most with red-tiled roofs. Channy motioned that they had reached her mother's stop, and the two of them jumped off the bus just before it sped away. They walked half a block to a small apartment building and climbed the short flight of stairs to the second floor. Channy rang the doorbell and let herself in. "Hi Mom," she called out. "It's me."

Immediately, Jonathan could hear screams of excitement as Channy's two young children, a boy and a girl, came rushing to the door.

Channy hugged her little ones and ushered Jonathan through the apartment's hallway into the living room. Bracha had been playing with the children. Upon hearing Channy's voice, she began to pick up the children's toys to make the living room more presentable for their guest. As Channy and Jonathan entered the living room, Bracha was still busy collecting Tinker Toy pieces and the other detritus of her grandchildren's three-day visit. When she finally looked up, she dropped everything she had been holding. Tears rolled down her cheeks as her whole body trembled in a mixture of joy and disbelief.

Channy had never seen her mother act this way, and was concerned. "What's happening? The children are frightened."

Momentarily, Bracha regained her composure. She spoke in English rather than her accustomed Hebrew. "Dear, you've brought home someone special whom I haven't seen for a very long time. I'll tell you all about it. Perhaps he and I could spend a little time getting reacquainted while you make dinner for the children. By the way, little Zef skinned his knee. You may want to check his dressing."

"Of course, Mom," Channy replied in English. "Then I don't have to introduce Dr. Sternbloom!"

"No. You don't."

"Okay. He can tell you all about Roni while I make dinner for the kids. Oh, I should have told you: I heard from someone in Alon's unit and he's fine."

"That's a relief. Now, off with you! Dr. Sternbloom and I have things to talk about."

As soon as Channy left the room, Bracha put her head in her hands and began to cry again. Dewy-eyed, she looked up at Jonathan with as much resolve as she could muster. Somehow, she blurted out, "How did you find me? Is Roni okay?"

Without taking his eyes off Bracha, Jonathan responded. "Roni is doing fine and should have a full recovery. As to how I found you, it was the Star of David that I gave you. Channy was wearing it at the hospital."

"That star has meant so much to me. I never thought it would bring you to me. But, now that you're here, you must hate me!"

Jonathan hesitated for a moment. He, too, had never imagined that this moment would arrive and that he would be in the same room with Lara of old. He had tried to prepare himself when he realized he would be seeing her. In truth, he was as unprepared as she was. He looked at the woman in front of him—the woman who had occupied so many of his thoughts and fantasies for so much of his life. She was now almost 30 years older than when he had last seen her. Her eyes were red from crying and she was wearing an unbecoming housecoat. Yet as Jonathan saw her, she had barely changed. He couldn't take in enough of her. Her eyes—those stunning grey eyes—had, with age, lost a bit of their brilliant sparkle. Her face, though still lean, had lost its angularity and hungriness. Yet, it was as if he had been thrust back in time. Whatever Bracha's appearance, he was experiencing a lightness that he had not thought possible for a very long period of his life.

"No, Lara—I mean, Bracha. I do not hate you, particularly now that I've found you again. I don't deny that I've wondered and

wept, but never out of hatred. But I have to know why. Why didn't you give me a chance to persuade you? Why did you never try to reach me?"

Bracha began to cry again. Finally, she was able to calm herself and wipe away the tears. "I don't want to relive that moment—that awful moment when I left. I tried to say it all in my note. I loved you so much, but I knew I would be nothing but heartache for you. Although not a Nazi myself, I was the product of a Nazi family and a Nazi way of life. And, there were things I hadn't told you!"

"Like what?"

"When I returned from England to Germany, my father was enraged that I had lived with a Jewish family. He insisted I make amends by becoming engaged to the son of a family friend—a good and loyal German, as my father put it, and a young officer. Stupidly, I complied. My fiancée was a small man, but he was a brute. I wanted to remain a virgin until we were wed, but he would have none of it. He abused me, raped me repeatedly and treated me as if I were swine. So, when I met you, I was already damaged goods."

"Bracha, please don't use those words. What happened to your fiancée?"

"Thankfully, before we married, he got shipped off to Poland. Later, we got word that he'd been killed by one of the Polish partisans."

"Poetic justice, I would say."

"Better than that, we found out that my thug of a fiancée had been killed not by a Polish underground figure, but rather by a waif of a Jewish gutter rat who was outside of the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto foraging for food."

"I know this will be hard to comprehend—although, nothing this day has to offer is easily comprehensible—but I believe I know the identity of that gutter rat and expect you will meet him in time."

"I don't understand."

"I know. But before we continue, why didn't you try to reach me after your husband died?"

"How do you know about my husband?"

"Channy told me. She told me other things as well. Bracha, I must know: Is Channy my daughter?

"Yes. Yes. How did you find out?"

"She looks exactly like my mother. I observed it immediately, even before I saw the Star of David. Then, she told me the star had once belonged to her father."

Bracha sighed and again began to cry.

"You haven't answered my question. Why didn't you try to reach me?"

"Against my best instincts, I did try to find you. It took a long time and when I did, I discovered you were married. Are you still married? Do you have children?"

"No children and no wife for about 25 years. But let's get back to Channy! Didn't you think I was entitled to know about her?"

"Of course, but I was still worried that I would ruin your life if I contacted you. I was also worried I would ruin Channy's life."

"What do you mean?"

"We are a nation created out of the ashes of the Holocaust. How do you think the parents of Channy's friends would have reacted if they found out I was the child of Nazis, masquerading as a Jew?"

"I don't know,"

"I don't know either, but I did not want to take the chance that Channy would suffer for what I'd done. I feared my Nazi past, and the possibility that my children would be declared non-Jewish because their mother wasn't Jewish was something I couldn't bear. The one constant in my life—the one thing that drove me to this country and provided me with any hope for redemption—was my desire to raise my child, our child, in a place where Jews could live and thrive."

"How did you get here?"

Bracha walked over to Jonathan. She placed her hands on his face and kissed him tenderly high on his cheek. Jonathan didn't resist. He hoped that the kiss would linger, and it did. It was as if a valve had been released and all of the pressure of the last 30 years had begun to escape. Bracha stepped back for a second and observed happily that Jonathan's eyes were closed and he was smiling. "Of course, I'll tell you. But I think we should let Channy know at the same time how all of this came about. Is that okay with you?"

"You're about to tell a lovely young woman that I'm her father and the grandfather of her two adorable children and you ask me if it's okay. It's the most okay thing I have ever experienced in my life. Although, I have to admit that I am a little nervous."

"Don't be. She's a wonderful person. Let's call her in."

Bracha yelled, "Channy dear, if the children are occupied, would you please come in here for a moment?"

Channy appeared almost immediately. She looked at her mother. "At least you're no longer crying. So, what's going on?"

"Some pretty remarkable things, actually. Channy, do you remember my telling you when you were little that you were named after your father's mother, Hannah?"

"Of course, Mother. What's new about that?"

"What is new, my love, is that Dr. Sternbloom's mother's name was Hannah."

"What a coincidence," replied Channy. Then, a flicker of recognition crept across her face. "Mother, you're not talking about a coincidence, are you?"

"No, my love, I'm not. Dr. Sternbloom's mother was your grandmother."

"Is Dr. Sternbloom my uncle?"

Bracha hesitated. Only the sounds of the children playing penetrated the stark quiet.

Finally, Bracha summoned all of her determination. "No," she replied. "He is not, dear."

"But . . . Oh, my God!"

"Yes, my dearest. He is your father!"

Channy began to buckle as if all of the air had been knocked out of her lungs. Jonathan had to run to her side to steady her. As Jonathan helped her to the couch, Channy could only stammer, "I don't understand. What about my father, Zef? His picture is right there on the bureau."

"I guess there is no place to begin but the beginning. Channy, I was not born Jewish and some may still consider me not Jewish. I was born a German and, even though I was not a Nazi, my family members were Nazis."

"Oh, my God," blurted out Channy again.

Bracha winced at seeing her daughter so sad, but she continued. "After the war, I wanted to make amends for my family. I found my way to Bavaria and arranged for employment as a nurse at a displaced persons camp near Munich. I brought my mother with me because she was ill and I had no one else. I found lodging for her and then headed to the camp. I told everyone that I was Swiss and I never mentioned my mother. There I met Jonathan, an American enlisted man working as a medic. We fell deeply in love and I spent the happiest days of my life with the man who now stands before you."

An involuntary whimper escaped from Channy's mouth, but she motioned her mother to continue.

"Jonathan gave me the Star of David and necklace you now wear in place of an engagement ring. When it came time for him to return to the United States to go to medical school, I lost my resolve. I thought my Nazi past would catch up to me, that I would be ridiculed and that Jonathan's career would be ruined. So, I fled, taking only the star and necklace with me as a memento of the love I had known with him."

Bracha looked at her daughter. Channy was no longer crying. She was looking back and forth between her mother and Jonathan, her newly-discovered father. It was as if she was trying to determine where in the cosmos they all belonged, and what to make of the misinformed years she had spent prior to this painful hour of revelation.

"About three weeks after I left the DP camp, I discovered I was pregnant. I thought about returning to the camp, but I knew that Jonathan would already have returned to the United States. In any event, I was now even more concerned about my Nazi past and I was also afraid Jonathan hated me for leaving him so abruptly."

"How could you have thought that?" intoned Jonathan almost inaudibly.

"Well, I did. I was alone and didn't know what to do. Then, it dawned on me. The one thing I wanted out of life was to rear my child as a Jew in a place where Jews could live and prosper unmolested by age-old hatreds such as those held by my family. I knew from my time in the camp that many of the Jews there hoped to go to Palestine and were just waiting for the British to ease the blockade against Jews returning to their historic homeland. So, pregnant with you, I went to a DP camp, hoping to use it as a launching pad to Palestine. I had already passed myself off as a Swiss and, with surprising ease, was able to change my identity once again and pass myself off as a displaced Jew."

"Oh, Mother," gushed Channy, crying uncontrollably.

"I'm so sorry, my dearest. It wasn't an easy time, but the people were very supportive. As Jonathan knows, I had lived with a Jewish family from England for a long time, so I knew as much about Judaism as most of the people in the camp. Even so, the camp was overcrowded, the weather was hot and I was having difficulty getting around. Then I met the man you have known all of your life as your father, Zef Wallenstein. He was 14 years older than me. Zef had lost his entire family in the Holocaust. Like me, he

was gaunt with sunken cheeks. But he had a drive and a desire to live, and he took pity on me. He never asked who your father was, but only asked questions pertaining to my comfort. He spent every day with me, and tended to my needs with no expectation of reciprocity of any kind. One day, Zef asked if I would consider marrying him. I had no one else in the world and Zef had been so good to me that I said yes. Soon, you were born and Zef could not have been a more devoted father. After a few months, a man came to the camp and told us that a ship was waiting to transport as many of us as it could hold to Palestine. He asked us if we wanted to come and, happily, we said yes."

"I'm so sad for what you've been through."

Bracha did feel sadness, but controlled her feelings and continued. "We were able to avoid the blockade and eventually landed in Haifa. Zef had been a boxer and a martial arts instructor in his native Czechoslovakia, and his reputation immediately brought him to the attention of the Haganah in Palestine. After that, I didn't see much of him. Though apparently, we did see enough of one another so that I became pregnant with your brother. As you know, in the War for Independence, Zef was a hero and died in a firefight while covering his retreating men. With Zef's death, the secret of my past was intact. And, so was yours!"

"What do you mean by referring to my past?"

"I was afraid that someone would claim you were not Jewish once they discovered I was not Jewish. I couldn't bear the thought of it. To protect both of us, I never said a word until now. Can you forgive me?"

"Can I forgive you for not telling me? No! Hell, no! But, what I can do is idolize you. You have been through so much and for so many noble reasons. How can I ever repay you for all you've done for me?"

With those words of reassurance, Bracha started toward her daughter, but Channy put up her hand to hold off her mother, if

only for a moment. Turning toward Jonathan, Channy continued. "Dr. Sternbloom, if you think I'm not floored, you are very much mistaken."

As he listened to this pronouncement, Jonathan could only bow his head. Whether he felt fear, relief, regret or guilt, he didn't know. All he knew was that he could not bear any words of reproach from his newly-discovered daughter. He started to speak.

Again, Channy raised her hand. "I've been observing the two of you while mother has been telling her story. From what I can see, the flame never flickered. I think the spark is still there and the two of you can recapture it. If that happens, I won't mind at all calling you—the man who captivated my mother, helped conceive me out of love and saved my brother's leg—my father."

Jonathan stood silently and in wonder. Bracha soon broke the silence. "What do you think, Jonathan? Can you forgive me?"

He looked at the woman who had dominated his dreams for so long. Gently and graciously, he replied. "I think that I'll always be grateful to your husband, Zef, for taking care of all of you and for leading you to this most wonderful of places."

At Jonathan's response, both women held back muffled cries of happiness.

Jonathan observed the look of satisfaction on their faces and continued. "I came here for a wedding, which had to be postponed due to the war. You might be interested in knowing that one of the men whom Zef saved on the day he died is the father of the groom-to-be."

"How do you know that?"

"I should let the father of the groom tell you directly."

"That would be nice. You are full of mysteries. But you still haven't answered my question. Is it that I am beyond forgiveness? Please, I must know. What do you think?"

For a second, Kayla's prophetic words flashed before him: *And when you do, there'll be someone waiting for you.* Jonathan smiled

endearingly and replied, "I think I should begin considering a Hebrew name to go along with yours! How does *Jonatan* sound?"

Jonathan again looked at the faces of the two women before him. In the brief time it had taken for a small Star of David to reveal itself, they had become the two most important people in his life. As he scanned their faces, he sensed their delight and knew he could not have uttered more welcome words.

"Now, what do you say to my receiving a formal introduction to my grandchildren?"

Someone Waiting for You is the second of two novels comprising Jerome Ostrov's World War II saga, *When Country Calls*. The story begins in August 1936 as Jonathan Sternbloom and his best friend Charlie Brody, both recent graduates of London's prestigious St Paul's School, prepare to disembark from the RMS Queen Mary. They are headed for Cornell University where they have received scholarships to play soccer. Originally from Hamburg Germany, Jonathan has already experienced many of life's highs and lows, especially the brutal death of his mother at the hands of Nazi Brownshirt thugs. As Europe trembles in the face of an increasingly bellicose Hitler, Jonathan and Charlie find opportunity in an America which, despite its ongoing struggle with anti-Semitism, is still a marvel of acceptance.

When war breaks out, Jonathan, now a medical student, enlists. From that point, the story follows Jonathan's medical unit through the great theaters of the war in Europe. As the war grinds on and the world begins to learn of Hitler's unimaginable atrocities, the reader is reintroduced to Jonathan's extended family in war ravaged Poland and to Charlie's relatives in occupied Denmark. Through tragic loss and uncommon determination, the family stories begin to converge until they reach their unexpected conclusion in yet another country of opportunity, Israel.

Jerome Ostrov is a retired attorney and the author of *In Ways Unimagined*, the predecessor to *Someone Waiting for You*. In both stories, Jerry has sought to give his children and grandchildren and readers everywhere an insight into how different the world was not long ago.

COMTEQ PUBLISHING
MARGATE, NEW JERSEY
Read more about
Someone Waiting for You online at
www.ComteQpublishing.com
$19.95

ISBN: 978-1-935232-85-8
51995
9 781935 232858